NEW ZION IN BABYLON

The Orthodox Church in the Twentieth Century

PART 3. THE GATES OF HELL (1925-1941)

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1. THE REPOSE OF PATRIARCH TIKHON

Early in 1925 Archbishop Seraphim (Lukyanov) wrote to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky): "His Holiness Tikhon is getting better after a third bold attempt on his life, but he has become very weak and is terribly exhausted. He frequently serves and receives people every day. They come to him from all corners of Russia. He has the following rule: every day he receives not more than 50 people; he speaks with no more than 10 hierarchs, and not longer than 5 minutes with the others. Sometimes in consequence of his weakness he receives people lying on a sofa. He has become much older and looks like a very old man. He has neither a Synod nor a chancellery around him. He avoids issuing written decrees so as to escape complications with the authorities. He has weakened not only physically, but also in his will – he has begun to make more concessions than he should, and is not firm. Therefore hierarchs often rebel openly against his decrees, and then he revokes his decisions.

"In Moscow there are now around 60 hierarchs who have been appointed to various dioceses by his Holiness, but who have been detained by the authorities. These hierarchs are not free and have no work. Their only occupation is to serve in various churches and thereby earn their bread, living somewhere and somehow…

"His Holiness Tikhon enjoys enormous authority and love. It is forbidden to commemorate his name, in some places people are even persecuted for commemorating it. He himself does not force anyone to commemorate his name, and now in Russia they usually pray thus: 'For their Holinesses the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Moscow'…

"People in Russia are very unhappy with the political statements of the Karlovtsy Council; they consider that at this time hierarchs should wall themselves off from any political actions, since all this is blamed on the Patriarch. The attitude to those who have fled is in general negative. They are very much waiting for an Ecumenical Council, thinking for some reason that the union of the Anglicans and even of the Catholics will take place at it. Professor Dmitrievsky is even intending to go to the East for this. They are hoping that the foreign powers will force the Bolsheviks to let the Patriarch and the hierarchs go to the Council. They do not always have a good understanding of the situation of the autocephalous Churches and their attitude to our Church.

"The question of the new calendar has not died down and it has many supporters, especially in view of the fact that the Bolsheviks do not recognize the old feasts and the believers are very constrained when they go to services. It seems that the Bolsheviks again want to put pressure on the Patriarch to introduce the new style…"[1]

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[1] Monk Benjamin, "Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda" (A Chronicle of Church Events of the Orthodox Church beginning from 1917), http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm, pp. 135-136.

Shortly before his death, on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1925, the Patriarch confided to his personal physician and friend, Michael Zhizhilenko, that he felt that the unceasing pressure of the government would one day force the leadership of the Church to concede more than was right, and that the true Church would then have to descend into the catacombs like the Roman Christians of old. And he counselled his friend, who was a widower, that when that time came, he should seek the monastic tonsure and episcopal consecration.[2]

That time came in 1927 with the notorious declaration of Metropolitan Sergius; and Michael Zhizhilenko, following the advice of his mentor, was consecrated as the first bishop of the anti-sergianist Catacomb Church in 1928, for which he paid with his life in Solovki in 1931. Thus was the concept and even the name of the Catacomb Church foreseen by the Martyr-Patriarch himself; it was, and is the "Tikhonite" Church.

The concept of "the Catacomb Church" brings to mind the situation of the Christians in Roman times, and again during the iconoclast persecutions, when the Church was forced to live in a semi-legal or illegal position vis-à-vis the State. Such a move was to prove still more necessary under the militant atheists of the Soviet anti-State, whose enmity towards religion was much fiercer than that of the pagan Roman and heretical Greek emperors.

The idea that the Russian Church might have to descend into the catacombs, in imitation of the Christians in early Rome, was suggested as early as 1909 by the future head of that Catacomb Church, Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Petrograd: "Now many are complaining about the hard times for the Church… Remembering the words of the Saviour with complete accuracy, we must expect still worse times for the Church… Without any exaggeration, she must truly live through a condition close to complete destruction and her being overcome by the gates of hell. Perhaps with us, exactly as in the land of freedom, America, they will drive the Name of Christ out of the schools. They will adapt prayer assemblies into ordinary meetings permitted by the police, as in that other land of freedom, France, and will convert the heritage of the Church, together with the very right of faith, into the property of the state. Perhaps the faith of Christ will again hide in the woods, the deserts, the catacombs, and the confession of the faith will be only in secret, while immoral and blasphemous presentations will come out into the open. All this may happen! The struggle against Christ will be waged with desperation, with the exertion of the last drop of human and hellish energy, and only then, perhaps, will it be given to hell and to mankind to assure us with complete obviousness of the unfailing power and might of the priceless promise of Christ: 'I will build My Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her' (Matthew 16.18)."[3]

The first Catacomb hieromartyr was probably the married priest Timothy Strelkov. He was beheaded by the Bolsheviks in June, 1918. But then his severed head was miraculously restored to his body. He was forced to go into hiding for twelve years until he was caught and executed for the second time in 1930.[4]

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[2] I.M. Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman Brotherhood Press, 1982, p. 56.

[3] Archimandrite Joseph, *Kormchij,* 23 May, 1909; quoted in Sergius and Tamara Fomin, *Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow: Rodnik, 1994, vol. I, p. 413.

In 1918, Patriarch Tikhon himself had called on the faithful to form unofficial, quasi-catacomb brotherhoods to defend the Orthodox Faith. Shemetov writes: "The brotherhoods which arose with the blessing of the Patriarch did not make the parishes obsolete where they continued to exist. The brotherhoods only made up for the deficiencies of the parishes."[5] In fact, the organization of unofficial, catacomb bodies like the brotherhoods became inevitable once it became clear that the God-hating State was bent on destroying the Orthodox Church. Thus according to Archbishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko), "the catacombs began in 1922, when renovationism began. The Optina elders blessed the Christians to go into the catacombs..."[6]

Sergius Shumilo writes: "On May 8, 1922 the Moscow tribunal in the course of a trial of a group of clergy resolved that it 'establishes the illegality of the existence of the organization called the Orthodox hierarchy'.

"Thus the Church headed by Patriarch Tikhon (called 'the Tikhonite Church' by the Bolsheviks) turned out to be outside the law. The universal repressions and mass closure of churches and monasteries had already, in the first years of Soviet power, compelled many church servers and believers to pass into an illegal situation. As the historian M. Shkarovsky note, 'we can say that the Catacomb Church begans its existence in an elemental way from the first months of Soviet power, when many believers were forced conduct a double, secret life… The concealment of holy things often became the first step to departing into the 'catacombs'.

"Thus the closest co-struggler of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Benjamin (Kazansky) of Petrograd, already in the spring of 1922 blessed the creation in Petrograd of several illegal monastic communities. Gradually, in the course of the 1920s, practically the whole territory of the country, especially Russia and Ukraine, was covered by a net of small 'house' monasteries. Eyewitnesses remembered the elemental appearance of such illegal monasteries in the Tambov region:

"'After the closure of the monastery some nuns lived for a while close by and baked bread, others dispersed in different directions. The former monastic residents got together to buy themselves houses in the city. They lived together in small communities of between 4 and 6 people… receiving spiritual nourishment from persecuted church servers. Instead of one large monastery in Kursanov there appeared many small ones.'…

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[4] Schemamonk Epiphany (Chernov), *Tserkov' Katakombnaia na Zemlie Rossijskoj* (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land) (MS), Woking, 1980.

[5] N. Shemetov, "Khristos sredi nas" (Christ is in our midst), *Moskovskij tserkovnij vestnik* (Moscow Ecclesiastical Herald), № 11 (29), May, 1990, p. 3

[6] "Vladyka Lazar otvechaiet na voprosy redaktsii" (Vladyka Lazar replies to the questions of the editorial board), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 22, 15/28 November, 1991, p. 5.

"In the words of M. Shkarovsky, 'the appearance in the spring of 1922 of renovationism as the ruling tendency became the basic reason for the appearance of secret churches in which services were conducted in secret in a significant number of the country's regions. Also, people who protested against the requisitioning of church valuables and zealots of Orthodoxy also departed into the 'catacombs'… The transition to serving in secret was blessed by the well-known Optina Elder Nektary (Tikhonov). And the Danilov groups of hierarchs (so named for their dwelling in the monastery of St. Daniel of Moscow) became in practice the creators of a net of secret parishes and monasteries. It was headed by Archbishop Theodore (Pozdeyevsky) of Volokolamsk… The Danilovites were linked to Archbishop Andrew (Prince Ukhtomsky) of Ufa, who played an exceptionally important role in the creation of the Catacomb Church and who in the 1920s carried out ordinations (together with other hierarchs) of more than 10 secret bishops.'

"Patriarch Tikhon himself from prison blessed the departure of the Church into the 'catacombs' and the carrying out of secret ordinations. While under house arrest in the Donskoy monastery, the holy hierarch Tikhon was able from the balcony of his flat to shout to Archbishop Andrew (Ukhtomsky): 'Vladyko, consecrate more hierarchs!' As Bishop Sergius (Druzhinin) witnessed under interrogation, Patriarch Tikhon after his release used to say to every bishop who came to him: 'The Bolsheviks want to shoot all the hierarchs and priests. So that the Church should not remain without an episcopate, and also without hierarchs, it is necessary to ordain to the priesthood and tonsure as monks as many as possible.'"[7]

On April 7, 1925, Patriarch Tikhon reposed in the Lord – it is almost certain that he was poisoned.[8] According to his cell-attendant, Constantine Pashkovich, his next to last words, uttered with an unusual severity, were: "Now I shall go to sleep deeply and for a long time. The night will be long, and very dark…"[9]

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[7] S. Shumilo, *V Katakombakh* (In the Catacombs), Lutsk, 2011, pp. 16-17, 20.

[8] For evidence that he was in fact poisoned, see Chernov, op. cit., Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 582; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 13; Shumilo, op. cit., pp. 29-30. D. Volkogonov (*Lenin*, London: Harper Collins, 1994, p. 384) hints at the same outcome, writing: "Lenin's instructions had been clear: 'the more reactionary clergy and reactionary bourgeoisie are shot… the better', and 'the priests must be sentenced to death'. Since it had proved impractical to execute Tikhon, the Cheka had had to find other ways of ensuring that the sixty-year-old Patriarch should not long survive his sojourn in their company." A. Levitin and V. Shavrov write: "The rector of Prophet Elias Church on Obydenny Street in Moscow, Fr. Alexander Tolgsky, who died in 1962, told one of the authors: 'After the acknowledgement, made to me during confession by one of the doctors of the Bakunin Hospital, I do not have the least doubt that Patriarch Tikhon was poisoned.'" (*Ocherki po istorii Russkoj Tserkvi* (Sketches on the History of the Russian Church), Kusnacht, 1997, p. 31; A. Paraev, "Istinnoe Pravoslavie I Sergianstvo", (True Orthodoxy and Sergianism), *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan Gazette), September, 1997 http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=544).

[9] Quoted in M.B. Danilushkin (ed.), *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovlenia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnej* (A

Two hours before his repose, Metropolitan Peter brought him the text of a declaration written by Tuchkov for his signature. From a room in the hospital next to that in which the Patriarch lay, he could be heard repeating in an excited voice: "I cannot do this, I cannot do this." It is very likely that the document which the Patriarch refused to sign was that which was published by *Izvestia* a week after his death as being supposedly his will and testament.

History of the Russian Church from the Reestablishment of the Patriarchate to our Days), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 201.

2. METROPOLITAN PETER OF KRUTITSA

On April 12, in the presence of over 50 bishops gathered from all over the country for his funeral, the deceased Patriarch's genuine will of January 7, 1925 was read out. It said that in the event of the Patriarch's death and the absence of the first two candidates for the post of patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitans Cyril of Kazan and Agathangelus of Yaroslavl, "our patriarchal rights and duties, until the lawful election of a new patriarch,… pass to his Eminence Peter, metropolitan of Krutitsa." At the moment of the Patriarch's death, Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangelus were in exile and unable to rule the Church. Therefore the 59 assembled hierarchs decided that "Metropolitan Peter cannot decline from the obedience given him and… must enter upon the duties of the patriarchal locum tenens."[10]

However, not all even of the Orthodox bishops accepted Metropolitan Peter's leadership.[11] Thus Archbishop Andrew of Ufa, who had already proclaimed his diocese autocephalous on the basis of Patriarch Tikhon's ukaz № 362 of November 7/20, 1920, declared: "I cannot recognize any leadership over myself, as a diocesan bishop, until a canonical Council. I am very firmly aware of my canonical duties, so as not to forget my rights to protect my flock from every unworthy 'episcopate' and from all dark powers plundering our spiritual sheep. Besides these considerations, I, on the basis of the 76th Apostolic Canon and the 23rd Canon of the Antiochian Council, cannot recognize the transfer of the administration of the whole Church by any secret spiritual testaments. This game with testaments is completely uncanonical."[12]

The transfer of ecclesiastical power by testaments was indeed unprecedented; but it had received the approval of the Council of 1917-18, so it could hardly be said to have violated the conciliar conscience of the Church. There would, however, come a time when "this game with testaments" would come to end, and the ukaz of 1920 would indeed become the basis of the Church's structure. But for two more years at least the patriarch's testament enabled the Russian Church to maintain a visible as well as a sacramental unity under the leadership of Metropolitan Peter. At the same time, there is no doubt that Metropolitan Peter, like Patriarch Tikhon before him, was distrusted by many churchmen, who suspected that he was too close to the communists.[13]

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[10] M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Svyateishego Patriarkha Tikhona* (The Acts of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon), Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1994, p. 413.

[11] And some important groups delayed their recognition. Thus it was not until November 12 that the Synod of ROCOR decreed that Metropolitan Peter should be recognised as the lawful locum tenens and the head of the Russian Church, with the introduction of his commemoration in all churches abroad (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 145).

[12] Archbishop Andrew, in Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Ekkleziologia Andrea Ufimskogo (kn. Ukhtomskogo)" (The Ecclesiology of Andrew of Ufa (Prince Ukhtomsky), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii* (Herald of the German Diocese), № 1, 1993, p. 20.

[13] This was confirmed by Metropolitan Peter himself, who wrote to Tuchkov on January 14, 1926: "Forgive me for my frankness - the people do not trust a person who often has dealings with the GPU. For example,

According to A. Smirnov, "priests and monks in opposition to Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa founded the first wave of underground communities and secret sketes and founded their own Hierarchy. Sergianism arose much later [in 1927]; the first catacombniks entered into conflict already with Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter on the grounds that they were collaborators…"[14]

The first need of the Church at that time was the convocation of a Council to elect a new Patriarch. But, of course, the GPU had no intention of allowing this. Their aim was a tamed Church – that is, a Church that accepted legalization from the government on the government's terms. Or, failing that, another schism. And that only as a stage towards the Church's final destruction; for, as the Central Committee member and leading party ideologist, I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, had said in 1922, although the schisms in the Church were in the party's interests, in principle the party remained the enemy of all religion and would eventually struggle against all of them.[15]

Encouraged by the Patriarch's death, the renovationists energetically tried to obtain union with the Patriarchal Church in time for their second council, which was due to take place in the autumn of 1925. Their attempts were aided by the Soviet authorities, who put all kinds of pressures on the hierarchs to enter into union with the renovationists. Metropolitan Peter, however, proved to be, in the communists' phrase, "a tough nut", a rock against which the gates of hell surged in vain.

In an epistle dated July 28, 1925, after protesting against the propaganda of the uniates and sectarians, which was diverting attention away from the main battle against atheism, he rejected all overtures towards union with the renovationists. And he went on "At the present time the so-called new-churchmen more and more discuss the matter of reunion with us. They call meetings in cities and villages, and invite Orthodox clerics and laymen to a common adjudication of the question of reunion with us, and to prepare for their pseudo-council which they are convening for the autumn of this year. But it must be clearly recalled that according to the canonical rules of the Ecumenical Church such arbitrarily gathered councils as were the meetings of the 'Living Church' in 1923, are illegal.

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the frequent visits that I and Metropolitan Seraphim of Tver made to the GPU in Patriarch Tikhon's time were far from being interpreted in our favour, while Metropolitan Seraphim was even nicknamed 'the Lubyanka metropolitan' by the people. And I noticed that at the beginning of my administration of the Church many people kept away from me" (quoted in Hieromonk Damascene (Orlovsky), *Mucheniki, Ispovedniki i Podvizhniki Blagochestia Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi XX Stoletia* (Martyrs, Confessors and Ascetics of Piety of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th Century), volume II, Tver: Bulat, 1995, p. 489).

[14] A. Smirnov, "Ugasshie nepominaiushchie v bege vremeni" (Died out non-commemorators in the course of time), *Simvol* (Symbol), № 40, 1998, p. 175.

[15] D. Pospielovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982, p. 91, note.

"Thus the canonical rules forbid Orthodox Christians to take part in them and still more to elect representatives for such gatherings. In accordance with the 20th rule of the Council of Antioch, 'no one is permitted to convene a Council alone, without those bishops who are in charge of the metropolitanates.' In the holy Church of God only that is lawful which is approved by the God-ordained ecclesiastical government, preserved by succession since the time of the Apostles. All arbitrary acts, everything that has been done by the new-church party without the approval of the most holy Patriarch now at rest with God, everything that is now done without our approval – all this has no validity in accordance with the canons of the holy Church (Apostolic canon 34; Council of Antioch, canon 9), for the true Church is one, and the grace of the most Holy Spirit residing in her is one, for there can be no two Churches or two graces. 'There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all' (Ephesians. 4.4-6).

"The so-called new-churchmen should talk of no reunion with the Orthodox Church until they show a sincere repentance for their errors. The chief of these is that they arbitrarily renounced the lawful hierarchy and its head, the most holy Patriarch, and attempted to reform the Church of Christ by self-invented teaching (*The Living Church*, №№. 1-11); they transgressed the ecclesiastical rules which were established by the Ecumenical Councils (the pronouncements of the pseudo-council of May 4, 1923); they rejected the government of the Patriarch, which was established by the Council and acknowledged by all the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs, i.e. they rejected that which the whole of Orthodoxy accepted, and besides, they even condemned him at their pseudo-council. Contrary to the rules of the holy Apostles, the Ecumenical Councils and the holy Fathers (Apostolic canons 17, 18; Sixth Ecumenical Council, canons 3, 13, 48; St. Basil the Great, canon 12), they permit bishops to marry and clerics to contract a second marriage, i.e. they transgress that which the entire Ecumenical Church acknowledges to be a law, and which can be changed only by an Ecumenical Council.

"The reunion of the so-called new-churchmen with the holy Orthodox Church is possible only on condition that each of them recants his errors and submits to a public repentance for his apostasy from the Church. We pray the Lord God without ceasing that He may restore the erring into the bosom of the holy Orthodox Church."[16]

The epistle had a sobering effect on many wavering clerics. As the renovationist *Vestnik Sviashchennago Sinoda (Herald of the Holy Synod)* was forced to admit: "Immediately Peter's appeal came out, the courage of the 'leftist' Tikhonites disappeared." So at their renovationist 'council' "Metropolitan-Evangelist" Vvedensky publicly accused Metropolitan Peter of involvement with an émigré monarchist plot, producing a patently forged denunciation by the renovationist "bishop" Nicholas of Latin America.[17]

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[16] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 418-421.
[17] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 744-745.

The Bolsheviks gave ready support to the renovationists in their battle against Peter. Thus S. Savelev writes: "On November 11, 1925, Yaroslavsky, Skvortsov-Stepanov and Menzhinsky [members of the commission for carrying out the decree on the separation of the Church from the State] were discussing Tuchkov's report 'On the future policy in connection with the death of Tikhon'. A general order was given to the OGPU to accelerate the implementation of the schism that had been planned amidst the supporters of Tikhon. Concrete measures were indicated with great frankness: 'In order to support the group in opposition to Peter (the patriarchal locum tenens…) it is resolved to publish in *Izvestia* a series of articles compromising Peter, and to use towards this end materials from the recently ended renovationist council.'… The censorship and editing of the articles was entrusted to the party philosopher Skvortsov-Stepanov. He was helped by Krasikov (Narkomyust) and Tuchkov (OGPU). This trio was given the task of censuring the declaration against Peter which was being prepared by the anti-Tikhonite group. Simultaneously with the publication in *Izvestia* of provocative articles against the patriarchal locum tenens, the Anti-Religious commission ordered the OGPU 'to initiate an investigation against Peter'."[18]

Meanwhile, Tuchkov initiated discussions with Peter with regard to "legalizing" the Church. This "legalization" promised to relieve the Church's rightless position, but on the following conditions:-

1) the issuing of a declaration of a pre-determined content;
2) the exclusion from the ranks of the bishops of those who were displeasing to the authorities;
3) the condemnation of the émigré bishops; and
4) the participation of the government, in the person of Tuchkov, in the future activities of the Church.[19]

However, Metropolitan Peter refused to accept these conditions or sign the text of the declaration Tuchkov offered him, thereby continuing to be a rock in the path of the atheists' plans to seize control of the Church. For, as he once said to Tuchkov: "You're all liars. You give nothing, except promises. And now please leave the room, we are about to have a meeting."

On December 5, 1925 Metropolitan Peter composed a will in the event of his death. And on the next day he wrote another in the event of his arrest, indicating three deputies: Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Metropolitan Michael of the Ukraine, and Archbishop Joseph of Rostov.[20] On December 9, the Anti-Religious Commission (more precisely: "the Central Committee Commission for carrying out the decree on the separation of Church and State") met and approved of the activities of the OGPU in inciting the Church groupings against each other. They also determined the timing of Metropolitan Peter's arrest. And the next day, December 10, Metropolitan Peter was placed under house-arrest…[21]

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[18] Savelev, "Bog i komissary" (God and the Commissars), in Bessmertny A.R. and Filatov, S.B., *Religia i Demokratia* (Religion and Democracy), Moscow: Progress, 1993, pp. 199-200.

[19] Gubonin, op. cit., p. 402.

[20] According to the anonymous author of *V Ob'iatiakh Semiglavago Zmia* (In the Embrace of the Seven Headed Serpent) (Montreal, 1984, p. 47), Metropolitan Peter made two wills regarding his deputies. In the first were three names, as indicated here. In the second were four: Metropolitans Cyril, Agathangelus, Arsenius and Sergius. Since Sergius was only fourth in order in the second will, he kept quiet about it.

On December 12, Metropolitan Peter was imprisoned in the Lubyanka. The other possible locum tenentes, Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangel, had already been exiled. And nearly a month earlier, on November 19, a group of bishops living in Moscow and of like mind with him were also arrested: Archbishops Nicholas of Vladimir, Pachomius of Chernigov, Procopius of the Chersonese and Gurias of Irkutsk, and Bishops Parthenius of Ananievsk, Damascene of Glukhov, Tikhon of Gomel, Barsanuphius of Kargopol, Joasaph of Chistopol and others.[22] The communists had removed the last canonical leaders of the Russian Church, and they were ready now to place their own candidate on the throne of the Russian first-hierarch…

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[21] Savelev, op. cit., p. 200.

[22] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 145.

3. THE MIRACLE OF THE CROSS IN THE SKY

A critical turning-point in the history of the Greek Church was the appearance of the sign of the Cross in the sky over the Old Calendarist monastery of St. John the Theologian near Athens. This greatly strengthened the faith of the people that God was with them in the struggle. Bishop Lazarus (Puhalo) writes: "In 1925, on the eve of the Exaltation of the All-Honourable and Life-giving Cross of our Saviour, September 14 according to the Orthodox Church calendar [27 according to the new], the all-night vigil was served in the church of St. John the Theologian in suburban Athens. By 9 o'clock that evening, more than 2000 true Orthodox faithful had gathered in and around the church for the service, since very few true Orthodox churches had been accidentally left open by the civil authorities. Such a large gathering of people could not, however, go unnoticed by the authorities. Around eleven p.m. the authorities despatched a battalion of police to the church 'to prevent any disorders which might arise from such a large gathering.' The gathering was too large for the police to take any direct action or to arrest the priest at that time and so they mingled with the crowd of worshippers in the already over-flowing courtyard of the church.

"Then, regardless of the true motives for their presence, against their own will, but according to the Will which exceeds all human power, they became participants in the miraculous experience of the crowd of believers.

"At 11.30 [during the procession of the Litya] there began to appear in the heavens above the church, in the direction of the North-East, a bright, radiant Cross of light. The light not only illuminated the church and the faithful but, in its rays, the stars of the clear, cloudless sky became dim and the church-yard was filled with an almost tangible light. The form of the Cross itself was an especially dense light and it could be clearly seen as a Byzantine cross with an angular cross bar towards the bottom. This heavenly miracle lasted for half an hour, until midnight, and then the Cross began slowly to rise up vertically, as the cross in the hands of the priests does in the ceremony of the Exaltation of the Cross in church. Having come straight up, the Cross began gradually to fade away.

"Human language is not adequate to convey what took place during the apparition. The entire crowd fell prostrate upon the ground with tears and began to sing hymns, praising the Lord with one heart and one mouth. The police were among those who wept, suddenly discovering, in the depths of their hearts, a childlike faith. The crowd of believers and battalion of police were transformed into one, unified flock of faithful. All were seized with a holy ecstasy.

"The vigil continued until four a.m., when all this human torrent streamed back into the city, carrying the news of the miracle because of which they were still trembling and weeping.

"Many of the unbelievers, sophists and renovationists, realizing their sin and guilt, but unwilling to repent, tried by every means to explain away or deny this miracle. The fact that the form of the cross had been so sharply and clearly that of the Byzantine Cross (sometimes called the Russian Cross), with three cross-bars, the bottom one at an angle, completely negated any arguments of accidental physical phenomena.

"The fact that such an apparition of the cross also occurred during the height of the first great heresy[23] must strike the Orthodox with an especial sense of the magnitude of the calendar question and of all that is connected with it. No sensible person can discuss this question lightly, with secular reasoning or with worldly arguments. Renovationists, like the Arians in 351, are left without extenuation or mitigation."[24]

There were many eyewitness accounts. Thus John Glymis, a retired police officer, witnesses: "I was one of the men from the Police Institute who were sent to stop the vigil that night, some fifty years ago, at the country Church of St. John the Theologian. The Old Calendarists were keeping vigil there, because it was the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross [according to the Old Calendar]. Since many people had gathered – more than two thousand individuals – we did not attempt to seize the priest as we had been ordered, but we sat down quietly in the nearby court and waited for them to finish. At about 11.30 at night, we heard a loud and strange uproar coming from the shouts of the multitude. Without any delay, we ran to see what was happening – and we saw. The whole multitude of the faithful was in a state of excitement. Some were weeping and others, crying out 'Lord, have mercy!', were kneeling and had turned their eyes toward heaven, and yet others were fainting, overwhelmed with great emotion. Then we too looked and beheld the marvel: an enormous radiant Cross, very high above the church, was illumining the whole area. At first, we were seized with fear, but immediately we came to ourselves and, forgetting the purpose for which we had been sent, we fell to our knees and wept like little children. Of course, it is superfluous for me to tell you that, filled with emotion, we attended the rest of the vigil to the end – not as persecutors but as faithful Christians. In the morning when we returned to the Institute, we told everyone about the great marvel we had been deemed worthy to see. Afterwards there was an investigation and all of us swore under oath that we had seen the Precious Cross clearly, high in the sky."

Another eye-witness, Athanasios Primalis, was driving a tram around Omonoia square. "Immediately I stepped on the brakes and stopped the vehicle. I stuck my head out of the tram door and I, the unworthy one, also saw the Precious Cross of our Lord – may His Name be glorified. It was shining over Mount Hymettus. I don't remember how long this lasted. I know only one thing: the Precious Cross which I saw that night turned me into a different man. Since then, everyone in my family has become a faithful child of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians…”[25]

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[23] Arianism – the reference is to the appearance of the sign of the Cross over Jerusalem in 351.

[24] *Orthodox Life*, vol. 22, №. 2, March-April, 1972; reprinted in Fr. Basile Sakkas, *The Calendar Question*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1973. For further witnesses and photographs, see Metropolitan Calliopius, *Deinopathimata G.O.Kh.* (The Sufferings of the True Orthodox Christians), Piraeus, 1990, vol. I, pp. 81-92, and Holy Transfiguration Monastery, *Papa-Nicholas Planas*, Boston, 1961, pp. 117-119.

However, on hearing of the miracle, the new calendarist bishops declared: “What appeared before the Old Calendarists, if it really appeared, was God's testimony that they are in great spiritual deception. The sign was telling them: 'Oh, unreasonable ones, do you not know that the Exaltation of the Holy Cross has passed? So many hundreds of thousands of people agree on the fact that today is September 26, and you are still thinking it is September 13 and the eve of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross! Why, unfaithful ones, do you celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the 27th, when it is to be done on September 14?' So, that is what this could mean, if there was any appearance at all.”[26]

But this was a desperate attempt by the new calendarists - the heavens spoke against them…

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[25] “Miraculous Appearance of Cross over Athens, Greece”, Smyrna1922@aol.com, May 20, 2004.

[26] Quoted in “Re[2]: [paradosis] (unknown)”, 1 January, 2003, orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com.

4. THE STRUGGLE ON MOUNT ATHOS

The centre of the struggle against the new calendar in the Greek-speaking lands was Mount Athos. In 1924, all the monasteries except Vatopedi stopped commemorating the Ecumenical Patriarch. On Great Thursday, 1926, 450 hieromonks and monks on Mount Athos led by the Romanian Fr. Arsenius Kotteas signed "The Sacred League of the Zealot Monks" for the defence of Orthodoxy against the new calendar. The League published its Constitutional Charter under the heading "The Anchor of Orthodoxy" until it was banned by a new Charter for Mount Athos ratified by the Greek government in 1927. This did not stop the zealot monks, however, who initiated a vigorous campaign against the new calendar throughout Greece. This led to the expulsion of nineteen zealots from the sketes of Vatopedi and Koutloumousiou in 1927. Some were allowed to circulate freely through Greece, while others were confined to a monastery in Mytilene on the island of Lesbos.

In 1926 the Athonite "Sacred League" was joined by the "Greek Religious Community of the True Orthodox Christians" in Athens in the struggle for the return of the Orthodox Calendar. On October 1, 1926, Hieromonk Matthew (Karpathakis), the confessor of three of the Athonite monasteries, went to Athens to help the True Orthodox there, and in 1929 the Sacred League sent two more hieromonks.[27]

On April 24, 1926 the State Church of Greece issued an encyclical (№ 2398 / 2203) which declared that the True Orthodox had "separated from the Church and cut themselves off from the Body of Christ, drawing upon themselves condemnation and excommunication, not knowing or, perhaps, having forgotten, that he who does not listen to the Church is like a heathen and a publican (Matthew 18.17)… The decisions of the Church are absolutely obligatory; he who does not submit to them no longer belongs to her, he is deprived of the gifts of Divine Grace; he is separated and cut off from her and is subject to eternal torment…"

So for the "sin" of simply remaining exactly where they were, and keeping to the traditions of their ancestors since apostolic times, the True Orthodox were "subject to eternal torment"!

In 1927 a patriarchal committee succeeded in negotiating a compromise that was accepted under pressure by all the monasteries but not by all the monks. The committee assured the Athonites that the calendar reform was not final in that it had not been accepted by all the Orthodox Churches. Moreover, the issue was to be reconsidered at an impending Pan-Orthodox Council that would resolve the matter. In this way, the committee persuaded the Athonites to continue following the Old Calendar while commemorating the Ecumenical Patriarch, pending the resolution of the question by a Pan-Orthodox Council. The compromise was accepted by all the Athonite monasteries, but only partially by Esphigmenou, which did not resume the commemoration of the Patriarch but did continue to receive his representatives and to commune with other monasteries that commemorated him. Moreover, they continued to concelebrate at the cathedral of the Protatou in Karyes, where the Patriarch was commemorated. Later, in the 1970s, Esphigmenou would break completely with the Patriarchate.[28]

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[27] The Zealot Monks of Mount Athos, *Syntomos Istoriki Perigraphi tis Ekklesias ton Gnision Orthodoxon Khristianon Ellados* (Brief Historical Description of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece), Mount Athos, 1973, pp. 8-11; Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 101-111.

However, many of the monks refused to accept the compromise. And to this day Mount Athos has remained a citadel of resistance to newcalendarism and ecumenism. Even if most of the monks now commemorate the Ecumenical Patriarch, Esphigmenou, with its 117 zealot monks, remains defiant.

The spirit of these zealot monks is well caught in the following excerpt from the life of the zealot monk Habbakuk "the barefoot": "After the adoption of the new calendar, a large number of Athonite Fathers decided to stop commemorating their bishop, who was subject to the Patriarch, and to break communion with the latter and with every church that accepted the innovation of the new calendar or even continued to be in communion with the innovators. But the majority of the monks did not dare to subscribe to this decision; whence the schism which continues to this day and whose effects are felt more and more acutely. At the beginning, twenty-four monks from the monastery of the Great Lavra rebelled, among whom was the peaceable Habbakuk.

"The quarrel was so intense that shouting could be heard even in the courtyard of the monastery. For a place in which a tranquil calm had reigned only shortly before, it was a harsh trial that suddenly flared up. Father Habbakuk shut himself in his cell. Prayer-rope in his hand, he prayed without ceasing that God bring back peace to sorely tried Athos. The monks who were faithful to Tradition continued, as before, to work in the monastery, but since they could no longer accept the commemoration of the patriarch they were not in communion of prayer with the other Fathers and celebrated separately, in a large chapel which had been granted them. Soon Fr. Habbakuk was exiled for a certain period to Vigla, to the cave of St. Athanasius. But very quickly the Fathers, seeing how noble his cause was and how much they loved him, could not stand it any longer and asked for his recall to the monastery. This time he was given the service of nurse; he was attached to the great hospital which the Lavra had for the numerous old or sick members of the community…

"However, the evil one again lay in wait. Soon his position as an old calendarist brought the elder a second exile to the cave of St. Athanasius. It was not long, however, before the sick complained: the nurse who had replaced Fr. Habbakuk did not have the strength to follow the routine of his predecessor in the very testing service of helping the sick. For Fr. Habbakuk was known to have a very strong constitution, he was the most dedicated worker of them all and never felt tired. So the sick very quickly got him back through their supplications! And one should have seen the enthusiasm with which the monks and the sick, who all loved him, reserved for his return.

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[28] "A Rejoinder to a Challenge of the Legitimacy of the Orthodox Monastic Brotherhood of the Holy Monastery of Esphigmenou", orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com, January 29, 2003.

"At the beginning of 1927 the community wanted to put an end, once and for all, to the pitiless quarrel which would end by destroying the monastery. And to assure them of a better success, they sent a written invitation to the governor, asking him to come and preside over the synaxis of the elders which would debate the question of the zealots faithful to the calendar of the Fathers for the last time. At the suggestion of a brother doctor, Fr. Athanasius Kambanaou, who was himself a zealot, they had elected Fr. Habbakuk to represent these Fathers. All the elders were present with the governor in the chair.

"He immediately asked Habbakuk: 'Father, how do you explain your deserting a community in the heart of which you had previously sown anarchy? And tell me: why are you not in communion with the other Fathers?' Fr. Habbakuk replied with meekness and humility: 'Has your Excellency the Governor read the holy canons of the *Rudder*?' 'And what does the *Rudder* say, Father?' asked the other. Fr. Habbakuk replied promptly: 'If you don't know it, Sir, go and read it first. Then you can come and judge us.'

"Judging that this reply constituted a grave insult to authority, the synaxis immediately exiled its author to the holy monastery of Xeropotamou. Poor Habbakuk was driven out of his place of repentance for the third time.

"About two months later, he was recalled from his exile. That day, which was March 9, they even asked him to be present at an all-night vigil with the governor. And in the morning, immediately after the service which had lasted all night, the governor mounted his mule and hurried back in haste to Karyes. Then Fr. Habbakuk, seeing an opportunity to make him hear the voice of reason, took the animal by the halter and set off on the path with him. And as they were going along he spoke to him as he knew how. He explained to him in a gentle way which had its effect on the hearer why the Fathers of the Holy Mountain were opposed to the change in the calendar, and he made him see how the ecclesiastical texts formed a good basis and justification for such an opposition. Very soon the governor was moved by the simplicity and childlike enthusiasm which Habbakuk put in his words, as well as by his admirable mastery of Holy Scripture. And it did not take him long to come to the conclusion that he was dealing with a virtuous man who was in love with an ideal. So immediately he arrived at Karyes he asked for the zealot to be returned without delay to his home monastery. Some days later, the Great Lavra received Habbakuk into its bosom again.

"However, his return did not take place without disappointment. Of the zealot fathers who had been his companions in the struggle, almost all had fled, some of their own free will and others constrained by force. And the few who remained had hastened to rejoin the Catholicon. From then on, Fr. Habbakuk had no peace until the day when, with one of the brothers who also loved the virtues, he left the monastery…

"Thus it was his love for the apostolic Tradition of the Church, a pure and disinterested love which was proof against tribulations and penalties, that always made him struggle to discern the will of God in everything. It was this love that had merited him exile to Vigla. But he had his reward: for it was also there, in the solitude of Vigla, that he was granted a multitude of spiritual goods, goods which were clearly not earned without sweat and grief, but which were great gifts for all that.

"… One day a monk whom he loved very much, Fr. Ephraim who was from the Great Lavra like himself, asked why he had become a zealot. He was given a reply full of a frank realism: 'Because God will call me to account; he will say: "Habbakuk, you knew the law of the Church, how did you come to trample it underfoot?' And he added that the new calendar was a 'sacrifice of Cain'."[29]

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[29] Hieromonk Theodoritus (Mavros), *Avvakoum, Le Zélote aux Pieds Nus* (Habbakuk, the Bare-Footed Zealot), a translation from the Greek by the Fraternité Orthodoxe de St. Grégoire Palamas, Paris, 1986, pp. 37-42. There is now an English translation of this book.

5. THE STRUGGLE ON VALAAM

Only in one part of the Russian Church outside Moscow was the new calendar ever introduced – in Finland, whose Church, as we have seen, had been taken away from the Russian Church by Patriarch Meletius of Constantinople. Already on July 19, 1923 he moved to force the great Russian monastery of Valaam, which was now outside Russia and within the bounds of the Finnish State, to accept the new calendar, writing mendaciously to Archbishop Seraphim (Lukyanov) that the new calendar had been accepted "with the agreement and by means of a decision of all the Orthodox Churches".[30]

Moreover, since the Finnish Church had accepted the western paschalion, it was likely that that, too, would be imposed on the Valaam monks…

At a general assembly of the 600 brothers, writes Nun Angelina (Zhavoronkova), "Abbot Paulinus read out an epistle from Bishop Seraphim in which he said that both Patriarchs Meletius of Constantinople and Tikhon of Moscow blessed Valaam to change to the new style from October 4. Two days later Vladyka Seraphim arrived. He was met by the objections of the brotherhood and the request that they remain with the old style. This was refused to them, and less than two weeks later five of the protesting brothers were forcibly expelled from Valaam and deprived of the mantia.

"… On June 25, 1924 the new Bishop of Karelia visited Valaam. In November the Valaam monks presented him with a petition asking him to allow them to keep the celebration at any rate of Pascha according to the old style, but this, too, was refused them, and those who refused to obey the decrees of the Finnish Church were threatened with exile from Valaam.

"Fr. Michael [Popov] was the spiritual father of the brotherhood at this exceptionally difficult time for Valaam. He encouraged everyone to remain faithful to the traditions of the Holy Orthodox Church. He often served in distant sketes and deserts and encouraged other Fathers to follow him. His nearest disciple and follower, Elder Michael the Younger, at that time Fr. Timon, was one of the most zealous defenders of the Orthodox calendar right until 1939, when the Valaam brotherhood was forced to leave their beloved monastery.

"Secret resistance increased especially in 1925. Fr. Michael sent his spiritual children by night with prosphoras to Gethsemane skete for Fr. Timon and they unfailing fulfilled their obedience, covering six kilometres every night. From the first days of the resistance the Gethsemane skete had become the place where people gathered for services according to the Old Church Calendar.

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[30] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 106.

"On the question of the calendar, the Valaam monks entered into correspondence with the Athonite zealots of Holy Orthodoxy, the so-called zealots, the elders of Karoulia, especially the learned monk Theodosius, who even wrote a whole composition about the importance of the calendar question. On Valaam Hieromonk Justinian, the main correspondent in this correspondence, was a disciple of Elder Michael. While Elder Theodosius was the last spiritual disciple by correspondence with Elder Theophanes the Recluse.

"In the evening on the eve of the monastery's feast day of SS. Sergius and Herman of Valaam, September 10, 1925, Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira, the representative of the Patriarch of Constantinople, arrived [from London]. Having gathered together the brethren, he declared that the new calendar was being introduced from now. On September 16 the brotherhood sent to Sortavala their own representatives in the persons of Fr. Michael, Fr. Joasaph the deputy, Fr. Jerome and the other older priests of the monastery to talk with Metropolitan Germanus. With tears they besought him to keep the old style in the monastery. In reply the metropolitan irritably shouted at them. On September 20 Metropolitan Germanus accompanied by Bishop Germanus arrived on the island to celebrate the all-night vigil. Half of the brotherhood did not come to the service. He called the brotherhood to peace and love.

"Immediately after this repressions began. The antimins were taken from all the skete churches. Fr. Timon was transferred from the Gethsemane skete to the main monastery. A little later Hieromonk Polycarp was exiled to Russia to almost certain death in the concentration camps for his published articles against the leadership of the monastery."[31]

"On September 25, 1925," writes Schema-Monk Nicholas of Valaam, "there was a division of people in Valaam as to the 'old' and 'new' style. Many of the brothers remained true to the old style. Legal proceedings began. The church administration arrived; there was a court with Abbot Paulinus in charge. They began to summon the brothers one by one, and many were expelled from the monastery. Then my turn also came. I went into the room, and there sat Abbot Paulinus with others from the church administration. Father Abbot said, 'Here is a slave of God; ask him.' One of them said that he would speak and that everything should be recorded. They asked, 'Do you accept Fr. Paulinus as Abbot?' 'Will you go to church services according to the new calendar?' I could not answer this question; it was as if my tongue had become paralysed. They hesitated and said, 'Well, why aren't you answering?' I couldn't say anything. Then they said: 'Well, go on, slave of God, and think this over.'

"I began to pray to the Mother of God, my 'Surety', in my heart. 'Tell me and indicate my life's path: Which side should I go to, the new or old style? Should I go to the cathedral or somewhere else?' And I, the sinful one, prayed to the Mother of God during my obedience in the kitchen. When I finished my evening obedience, I went to my cell and thought in the simplicity of my heart, 'Why don't you answer me, Mother of God?' But the grace of God did not abandon me, a sinner. He wants salvation for all. Suddenly the cathedral appeared before me, the same as it is: the same height, length and width. I was amazed at this miraculous apparition – how could it enter my small cell? But my inner voice said to me: 'Everything is possible with God. There is nothing impossible for Him.' 'Well,' I thought, 'one must go to church in the cathedral according to the new style.' Then, as I was thinking thus, a blue curtain came down from above, in the middle of which was a golden cross. The cathedral became invisible to me, and the inner voice said to me: 'Go to the old style and hold to it.' And I heard a woman's voice coming from above the corner: 'If you want to be saved, hold fast to the traditions of the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers.' And then the same thing was repeated a second time, and the third time the voice said: 'If you want to be saved, keep fast to the tradition of the Holy Apostles and Holy Fathers, but not these "wise" men.' After this miracle, everything disappeared and I remained alone in my cell. My heart began to rejoice that the Lord had indicated the path of salvation to me, according to the prayers of the Mother of God." [32]

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[31] Nun Angelina, "Starets Mikhail Starshij, ispovednik strazhduschego pravoslavia", *Russkij Palomnik*, № 17, 1998, p. 64.

"On September 12, 1926," continues Nun Angelina, "the former cathedral elders of Valaam, who had remained faithful to patristic Orthodoxy, were summoned to a new trial in Serdobol. The trial was pro forma, and 35 monks were condemned to exile, while the abbot was to deal with the rest, dispersing them among all the sketes.

"On October 9 the sentence was carried out. One of those exiled from Valaam, Hieromonk Nicander, the former spiritual father of the famed Lesna monastery, remembers:

"'We shall never forget that… sad day… Our own Abbot Paulinus and our own monastic brothers handed us over to the police… For the sake of temporary comfort, out of fear of men, they drowned out the voice of their conscience and transgressed the holy canons of the Church… The day of our exile that autumn was exceptionally quiet, Lake Ladoga was calm and the first powdery snow covered Valaam… By eight o'clock in the morning we had all gathered on the ferry… the Old Calendarist monks who remained, together with some unwilling new calendarists, came to say goodbye to us; not a few tears were shed on both sides. (Even the gendarme wept, remembered Fr. Philemon.)… How bitter it was for us to leave our native nest, but our souls were at peace, for we felt that we were suffering for the sake of righteousness and that God was with us.'

"On November 15 an Investigative Commission arrived at the monastery, and in the course of four days interrogated each of the brothers on their own, asking whether they recognised Bishop Germanus and whether they would serve with him. Fr. Michael was defrocked by a church court, removed from his obedience as Spiritual Father and exiled on December 15 to the distant St. Herman skete. (According to the words of Fr.

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[32] Schema-Monk Nicholas, *The Orthodox Word*, №№. 160-161, September-December, 1991, pp. 268-270.

Athanasius, who left memoirs of his elder, Fr. Michael was first exiled to Tikhvin island.) Thence he was transferred to the Skete of St. John the Forerunner in 1926, where he spent the following eight years [until his death on May 8, 1934], suffering from a weakness of the heart in the severe conditions of the strictest skete on Valaam. In that year 44 of the brothers were exiled and 48 left Valaam…"[33]

In 1939, when the Soviets captured Old Valaam, the spiritual life of the great monastery came to an end…[34]

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[33] Nun Angelina, op. cit., pp. 64-66. There was a nationalist, Russophobic element to the introduction of the new calendar in Finland. Bishop Germanus (Aav) forbade his priests to wear pectoral crosses of Russian make, and would even paint over Slavonic inscriptions on old icons. His successor, Paul (Gusev), was a Russian who pretended to be a Finn. He, according to one source, "showed an indefatigable concern for one thing alone: how to make services in his Church completely unlike those in the Russian Church ("Demons in cassocks", orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com, December 22, 2003).

[34] In New Valaamo in Finland, according to the witness of a True Orthodox Christian who spent a year there before his conversion, there continued to be Russian monks who confessed the Old Calendar – an abbot named Symphorian and another monk over one hundred years old. They lived in separate quarters and refused all communion with the new calendarists and visiting Soviet hierarchs. Abbot Symphorian died in the 1980s; nothing is known about the other monk.

6. THE ALBANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Although Albania had been overrun by several foreign armies during World War One, she still managed – just – to retain a certain independence. But national unity was a big problem. The lack of literacy, and the lack of a tradition of statehood, meant that rivalries between clans, and the refusal of certain religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities to accept incorporation into the new State continually undermined its unity.

In 1913 about 4.7% of the population was Greek-speaking, and considered themselves to belong to the Greek province of Northern Epirus, not Albania. There were also some Serbian Orthodox in the north-east who looked towards Yugoslavia.

In 1922, in order to discourage separatist tendencies on the part of these minorities, Ahmet Bey Zogolli, successively interior minister, prime minister and first king of Albania, decreed that all clergy in the country (of all three religions: Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox) should be native Albanians. He also encouraged the creation of an autocephalous Albanian Orthodox Church. At the same time he allowed the consecration, on 18 June, 1922, of the secretary of Dečani monastery, Victor Mikhailovich, as Vicar-Bishop of Scutari for the Serbian Orthodox living in Albania - which had the advantage of pitting the Serbian and Ecumenical Patriarchates against each other in a struggle for jurisdiction in Albania.[35]

In 1923, a congress in Tirana "declared that Albanian Islam should be independent of the caliphate. Asked if his regime was Muslim and willing to work in close accord with Turkey, Zogu replied that secular Albania intended to progress on occidental lines."[36]

At this point one of the most colourful figures in the history of World Orthodoxy appeared on the scene. On November 21, 1923 Archimandrite Theophan (Noli) was consecrated to the episcopate of the Autocephalous Church of Albania as Bishop of Durres. In 1924 he began official negotiations with the patriarchate of Constantinople restricting himself at first to demanding only Church autonomy. The patriarchate did not object to this in principle, but demanded that the language of Divine services in the Albanian Church should remain only Greek. The Albanians categorically rejected this, and relations with Constantinople worsened.[37]

However, Bishop Theophan was much more than a church figure. He was also, according to Tomes, "leader of the Democratic Party, League of Nations delegate, Bachelor of Arts, biographer of Skanderberg, translator of Stendhal, Maupassant and

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[35] Fr. Srboliub Meletich, "Behind the Sourozh Phenomenon: Spiritual Freedom or Cultural Captivity? Meletios Metaksakis, Metropolitan, Archbishop, Pope and Patriarch", hocna@yahoogroups.com, July 5, 2006.

[36] Jason Tomes, *King Zog, Self-Made Monarch of Albania*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007, p. 57.

[37] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 118, 119.

Molière, liturgist, composer and orator. A stocky Tosk with a big beard jutting above his clerical collar, Bishop Noli had been an actor in Athens, a schoolmaster in Egypt, a lumberman in Buffalo, a canning-factory worker in New York, a cinema organist in Boston, and a student at Harvard before settling in Albania in 1921 at the age of thirty-nine. He was Orthodox purely in the confessional sense, and even that was questionable. Ordained a deacon by the Russian Orthodox archbishop of New York in 1908, Noli founded an Albanian Orthodox Church in the USA with himself as its sole priest. Privately, meanwhile, he claimed to be a Nietzschean and, at various times, labelled Christianity a capitalist instrument of enslavement and stated that the whole truth was in Omar Khayyam. He admitted submitting religion to politics in the best Albanian tradition. His church was intended to promote national consciousness among Christian Turks hitherto attached to Greek Orthodoxy. He translated the liturgy and made himself a bishop by persuading an assembly of Albanian-Americans to acclaim him as such in 1919. Despite his pioneering work, it was only with reluctance that the new native Albanian Orthodox Church accepted him. Some fanciful critics even alleged that he wore an artificial beard in order to look more Episcopal.

"During fourteen years in the USA, Noli had won pre-eminence within the Albanian community there, which numbered over twenty thousand. He went to London in 1913 to lobby for independence and campaigned for international recognition after the World War. It delighted foreigners to engage in intellectual discourse with an Albanian bishop. He was a complex man whose style was often self-mocking. Sometimes he sounded sure of his messianic significance; moments later, his tone might be flippantly cynical."[38]

In 1924 Noli led a successful insurrection against Zogu, who fled the country. Supported politically and financially by thousands of American Albanians, for émigré writers "Bishop Noli symbolised enlightenment, democracy and progress, while Zog connoted ignorance, autocracy and reaction". However, once in power, he "established a mixed military-civilian cabinet without reference to Parliament, and seemed in no hurry to hold elections. England was the curse of Europe, he said, as free institutions copied from Westminster were nothing but 'a bloody farce'."[39]

Moreover, he made contact with the Soviets, who sent a mission to Tirana in December disguised as choristers! Noli continued to prove his communist credentials when, at the end of World War Two, he urged the Americans to recognize the communist Hoxha regime… [40] This flirting with the Soviets enraged foreign governments, especially the Yugoslav King Alexander. And so with Yugoslav and White Russian backing Zog returned to power. Bishop Theophan was forced to flee to America, where he became the leader of the Albanian Orthodox in that country.[41]

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[38] Tomes, op. cit., p. 66.

[39] Tomes, op. cit., p. 67.

[40] Tomes, op. cit., p. 266.

[41] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 123.

Zog controlled the new government, which came to resemble an Italian protectorate (the Italians paid more than the Yugoslavs). In 1928 he was proclaimed king of "a democratic, parliamentary, hereditary monarchy". (Predictably this was denounced by Bishop Noli as "an odious crime against the Albanian people" and "a farce prepared at Rome and played at Tirana".[42]) "A cult of the Pelasgians and assertions that ancient Macedonia, Epirus and Illyria were all Albanian states enabled nationalistic historians to provide Zog with a list of precursors that included Achilles, Alexander the Great, Pyrrhus of Epirus, Queen Teuta of Illyria, Diocletian, Constantine the Great and Justinian…"[43]

In 1925, the Albanian Archimandrite Vissarion (Govanni), who had been elected in 1922 during a "Great Albanian Orthodox Church Council", was consecrated as the first national bishop of Albania by two hierarchs of ROCOR, Michael of Stavropol and Germogen of Yekaterinoslav in the monastery of St. Savvas. This probably took place with the knowledge of the Serbian Church authorities.[44]

In February, 1929, Bishop Vissarion together with Bishop Victor (Mikhailovich) of the Serbian Orthodox Church, who had been living in Albania for several years, without any prior agreement with Constantinople, consecrated three bishops, all Albanians. These four bishops then formed a Synod of the Albanian Orthodox Church, which immediately elected Bishop Vissarion as its president and the archbishop of All Albania. Immediately after receiving confirmation from King Zog, the Synod proclaimed the Albanian Church autocephalous, of which event its first-hierarch promptly informed the other Orthodox Churches.

The Albanian Synod then accepted a constitution according to which "the official language of the Albanian Church is Albanian… The archbishop, bishops, regional hierarchal representatives, the great mitre-bearing econom, the chief secretary of the Holy Synod, and also the clergy that are the assistants and deputies of the Archbishop and bishops must be Albanians by blood and language and also Albanian subjects… All clergy mentioned in article 16 who are now in service with the Autocephalous Church of Albania, if they do not have the properties mentioned in the above-mentioned article, are deprived of their Church rank immediately the present Constitution comes into force."[45]

King Zog himself, though formally Muslim, was interested in religion only from a political point of view. The Roman Church worried him "because of his foreign connections, especially after the rapprochement between Mussolini and the Vatican. Italy did indeed subsidise Albanian Catholicism, and [the Italian diplomat Baron] Aloisi inspired a move to bring the Albanian Orthodox Church into communion with Rome: a Uniate church opened at Elbasan on 21 September, 1929. The same day, the King proclaimed a law on religious communities giving him control over appointments and finances."[46]

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[42] Tomes, op. cit., p. 102.

[43] Tomes, op. cit., p. 145.

[44] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 140.

[45] Monk Benjamin, Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij (1928-1938), (Chronicle of Church Events, 1928-1938), part 2, http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm, p. 6.

The Greek Albanians, meanwhile, were feeling aggrieved because the 1914 treaty on the status of Northern Epirus had not been fulfilled, and schools for Greek-speakers were being nationalised.

"Athens accused Tirana of violating minority rights and appealed to the League of Nations. Zog made concessions in 1934 but failed to halt the bitter war of words. At one point, he threatened to dismiss every Greek-Albanian in public service, and there was also talk of swamping the Greek minority district with refugees from Kosovo.

"When, eventually, the Permanent Court of International Justice gave its advisory opinion in favour of Greece, Albania complied in full and Greek private schools reopened. 'A death blow' to national unity, grumbled Zog."[47]

In April, 1937 the Ecumenical Patriarchate recognized the autocephaly of the Albanian Church, with certain qualifications.[48] This was surprising in view of the anti-Greek bias of this Church. Quite apart from its illegal autocephaly and introduction of the new calendar, the blatant phyletism (nationalism) of this new Albanian Church would be sufficient to demonstrate its heterodoxy…

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[46] Tomes, op. cit., p. 151.

[47] Tomes, op. cit., p. 175.

[48] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 59.

7. THE RISE OF METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

The events that followed the arrest and imprisonment of Metropolitan Peter in December, 1925 are not at all clear. We know that a struggle for power took place between a group of bishops led by Archbishop Gregory (Yatskovsky) of Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk), on the one hand, and Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod (Gorky), on the other, a struggle which Sergius eventually won. It is usually considered that the Gregorians were the agents of the atheist authorities, whose plot was foiled by Sergius, and this may well have been the case.

However, it may be closer to the truth to say that the authorities were playing the two groups off against each other, and would have been happy with either outcome provided it gave them a more malleable church leader than Metropolitan Peter.

According to the more generally accepted version of events, on December 14, although unable to leave Nizhni-Novgorod at the time, Metropolitan Sergius, without consulting with any other senior bishop, announced that he was taking upn himself the rights and duties of the deputy of the Patriarchal locum tenens. However, he was prevented by the OGPU from coming to Moscow, many bishops refused to recognize him (for example, Archbishop Andrew of Ufa), and on December 22, 1925, a group of nine bishops led by Archbishop Gregory gathered at the Donskoy monastery.

The Grigorians, as they came to be called, gave a brief description of the succession of first-hierarchal power since 1917, and then declared concerning Metropolitan Peter: "It was not pleasing to the Lord to bless the labours of this hierarch. During his rule disorders and woes only deepened in the Holy Church… In view of this we… have decided to elect a Higher Temporary Church Council for the carrying out of the everyday affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and for the preparation of a canonically correct Council… Moreover, we have firmly decided not to enter into any relationship or communion with the renovationists and renovationism in all its forms… Instead, we consider it our duty to witness to our complete legal obedience to the powers that be of the Government of the USSR and our faith in its good will and the purity of its intentions in serving the good of the people. We in turn ask them to believe in our loyalty and readiness to serve the good of the same people…"[49]

These words clearly revealed the pro-Soviet inspiration of the group. The next day they sought legalisation from the GPU, and ten days later, on January 2, 1926, they received it. On January 7, *Izvestia* published an interview with Archbishop Gregory thanking the authorities.

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[49] Protopriest Vladislav Tsypin, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi 1925-1938* (A History of the Russian Church, 1925-1938) Moscow: Monastery of the Meeting of the Lord, 1999, p. 33.

On January 14, Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Archbishop Gregory demanding an explanation for his usurpation of power. Gregory replied on January 22, saying that while they recognized the rights of the three locum tenentes, "we know no conciliar decision concerning you, and we do not consider the transfer of administration and power by personal letter to correspond to the spirit and letter of the holy canons."[50] This was a valid point which was later to be made by several catacomb bishops. But Sergius wrote again on January 29, impeaching Gregory and his fellow bishops, banning them from serving and declaring all their ordinations, appointments, awards, etc., since December 22 to be invalid.

It was a moot question whether Sergius had the power to act in this way. On February 26, Archbishop Hilarion of Verey wrote to Sergius from prison: "The temporary ecclesiastical organ must unite, and not divide the episcopate, it is not a judge or punisher of dissidents – that will be the Council."[51] However, on March 18 Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Peter attempting to justify his "rights" as "first bishop", able to ban bishops even before the Council. And he gave the similar actions of Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter himself as precedents.[52] But here he "forgot", as he was to "forget" again later, that his own position was much weaker than that of the Patriarch or Metropolitan Peter, each of whom were recognized in their time by the majority of the episcopate as the true head of the Russian Church.

On January 29, three Grigorian bishops wrote to Metropolitan Peter claiming that they had not known, in their December meeting, that he had transferred his rights to Sergius, and asking him to bless their administration. The free access the Grigorians had to Peter during this period, and the fact that Sergius was at first prevented from coming to Moscow, suggests that the GPU, while not opposing Sergius, at first favoured the Gregorians as their best hope for dividing the Church.[53]

On February 1 the Grigorians obtained an interview with Metropolitan Peter in prison, in which they asked him to annul Sergius' rights as his deputy and, in view of Sergius' inability to come to Moscow from Nizhni and the refusal of the other deputies, Michael of Kiev and Joseph of Rostov, to accept the deputyship, to hand over the administration of the Church to them. Fearing anarchy in the Church, Metropolitan Peter went part of the way to blessing the Grigorians' undertaking. However, instead of the Grigorian Synod, he created a temporary "college" to administer the Church's everyday affairs consisting of Archbishop Gregory, Archbishop Nicholas (Dobronravov) of Vladimir and Archbishop Demetrius (Belikov) of Tomsk, who were well-known for their firmness.

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[50] Gubonin, op. cit., p. 429.

[51] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 147.

[52] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 148.

[53] Bishop Gregory Grabbe, *Russkaia Tserkov' pered litsom gospodstvuiushchego zla* (The Russian Church before the face of Dominant Evil), Jordanville, 1991, pp. 57-58. The Grigorian Bishop Boris of Mozhaisk also said that his Synod "received the rights to assemble, and to have publications and educational institutions." (Grabbe, op. cit., p. 61)

The Grigorians and Tuchkov, who was present at the meeting, were silent about the fact that Nicholas was in prison and that Demetrius could not come to Moscow. This conspiracy of silence again suggests that they were in league with each other.

Tuchkov proceeded to a further deception: he agreed to summon Demetrius from Tomsk, and even showed Peter the telegram – but never sent it. When Peter, feeling something was wrong, asked for the inclusion of Metropolitan Arsenius (Stadnitsky) in the college of bishops, Tuchkov again agreed and promised to sign Peter's telegram to him. Again, the telegram was not sent.

It has been argued by Lev Regelson[54] that Metropolitan Peter's action in appointing deputies was not canonical, and created misunderstandings that were to be ruthlessly exploited later by Metropolitan Sergius. A chief hierarch does not have the right to transfer the fullness of his power to another hierarch as if it were a personal inheritance: only a Council representing the whole Local Church can elect a leader to replace him. Patriarch Tikhon's appointment of three locum tenentes was an exceptional measure, but one which was nevertheless entrusted to him by – and therefore could claim the authority of – the Council of 1917-18. However, the Council made no provision for what might happen in the event of the death or removal of these three. In such an event, therefore, patriarchal authority ceased, temporarily, in the Church; and there was no canonical alternative, until the convocation of another Council, but for each bishop to govern his diocese independently while maintaining links with neighbouring dioceses, in accordance with the Patriarch's ukaz no. 362 of November 7/20, 1920.

In defence of Metropolitan Peter it may be said that it is unlikely that he intended to transfer the fullness of his power to Metropolitan Sergius, but only the day-to-day running of the administrative machine. In fact he explicitly said this later, in his letter to Sergius dated January 2, 1930.[55] Moreover, in his declaration of December 6, 1925, he had given instructions on what should be done in the event of his arrest, saying that "the raising of my name, as patriarchal locum tenens, remains obligatory during Divine services."[56] This was something that Patriarch Tikhon had not insisted upon when he transferred the fullness of his power to Metropolitan Agathangel in 1922. It suggests that Metropolitan Peter did not exclude the possibility that his deputy might attempt to seize power from him just as the renovationists had seized power from the patriarch and his locum tenens in 1922, and was taking precautions against just such a possibility.

The critical distinction here is that whereas the patriarchal locum tenens has, de jure, all the power of a canonically elected Patriarch and need relinquish his power only to a canonically convoked Council of the whole local Church, the deputy of the locum tenens has no such fullness of power and must relinquish such rights as he has at any time that the Council or the locum tenens requires it. Nevertheless, the important question remains: why did Metropolitan Peter not invoke ukaz no. 362 and announce the decentralization of the Church's administration at the time of his arrest? Probably for two important reasons:

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[54] Regelson, *Tragedia Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1945* (The Tragedy of the Russian Church, 1917-1945), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977.
[55] Gubonin, op. cit., p. 677.
[56] Gubonin, op. cit., p. 422.

1. The restoration of the patriarchate was one of the main achievements of the Moscow Council of 1917-18, and had proved enormously popular. Its dissolution might well have dealt a major psychological blow to the masses, who were not always educated enough to understand that the Church could continue to exist either in a centralized (though not papist) form, as it had in the East from 312 to 1917, or in a decentralized form, as in the catacombal period before Constantine the Great and during the iconoclast persecution of the eighth and ninth centuries.

2. The renovationists – still the major threat to the Church in Metropolitan Peter's eyes – did not have a patriarch, and their organization was, as we have seen, closer to the synodical, state-dependent structure of the pre-revolutionary Church. The presence or absence of a patriarch or his substitute was therefore a major sign of the difference between the true Church and the false for the uneducated believer.

There is another important factor which should be mentioned here. Under the rules imposed upon the Church administration by Peter the Great in the eighteenth century, the Ruling Synod was permitted to move bishops from one see to another, and even to retire, ban or defrock them, in a purely administrative manner. This was contrary to the Holy Canons of the Church, which envisage the defrocking of a bishop only as a result of a full canonical trial, to which the accused bishop is invited to attend three times. Peter's rules made the administration of the Church similar to that of a government department – which is precisely what the Church was according to his *Reglament*. It enabled the State to exert pressure on the Church to move and remove bishops in the speediest and most efficient manner, without the checks and balances – and delays – that following the Holy Canons would have involved. This was bad enough in itself, even when the State was kindly disposed towards the Church. It was catastrophic when the State became the enemy of the Church after 1917…

Now Patriarch Tikhon, while not rescinding Peter's rules, had opposed the pressure of the State, on the one hand, and had preserved the spirit of sobornost', or conciliarity, on the other, consulting his fellow bishops and the people as far as possible. But the danger remained that if the leadership of the Church were assumed by a less holy man, then the combination of the uncanonical, Petrine government, on the one hand, and an increase of pressure from the State, on the other, would lead to disaster…

On February 4, 1926, Metropolitan Peter fell ill and was admitted to the prison hospital. A war for control of the Church now developed between the Grigorians and Sergius. The Grigorians pointed to Sergius' links with Rasputin and the "Living Church":

"On recognizing the Living Church, Metropolitan Sergius took part in the sessions of the HCA, recognized the lawfulness of married bishops and twice-married priests, and blessed this lawlessness. Besides, Metropolitan Sergius sympathized with the living church council of 1923, did not object against its decisions, and therefore confessed our All-Russian Archpastor and father, his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, to be 'an apostate from the true ordinances of Christ and a betrayer of the Church', depriving him of his patriarchal rank and monastic calling. True, Metropolitan Sergius later repented of these terrible crimes and was forgiven by the Church, but that does not mean that he should stand at the head of the Church's administration."[57]

All this was true; but these arguments were not strong enough to maintain the Grigorians' position, which deteriorated as several bishops declared their support for Sergius. In particular, Archbishop Hilarion of Verey, who had been released from prison for talks with the GPU, refused to recognise the Grigorians – for which he received an extension of his sentence. Another bishop who strongly rejected the Grigorians was Basil of Priluki.

Yaroslavsky, Tuchkov and the OGPU had already succeeded in creating a schism between Metropolitan Sergius and the Grigorians. They now tried to fan the flames of schism still higher by releasing Metropolitan Agathangel, the second candidate for the post of patriarchal locum tenens, from exile and persuading him to declare his assumption of the post of locum tenens, which he did officially from Perm on April 18. They also decided, at a meeting in the Kremlin on April 24, to "strengthen the third Tikhonite hierarchy – the Temporary Higher Ecclesiastical Council headed by Archbishop Gregory, as an independent unit."[58]

On April 22, Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Peter at the Moscow GPU, as a result of which Peter withdrew his support from the Grigorians, signing his letter to Sergius: "the penitent Peter". It would be interesting to know whether Sergius knew of Metropolitan Agathangel's declaration four days earlier when he wrote to Peter. Hieromonk Damascene (Orlovsky) claims that Agathangel did not tell Sergius until several days later.[59] But the evidence is ambiguous; for Gubonin gives two different dates for the letter from Agathangel to Sergius telling the latter of his assumption of the rights of the patriarchal locum tenens: April 18 and 25.[60] If the later date is correct, then Sergius cannot be accused of hiding this critical information from Metropolitan Peter. If, however, the earlier date is correct, then Sergius already knew of Agathangel's assumption of the rights of locum tenens, and his keeping quiet about this very important fact in his letter to Metropolitan Peter was highly suspicious. For he must have realized that Metropolitan Agathangel, having returned from exile (he actually arrived in his see of Yaroslavl on April 27), had every right to assume power as the eldest hierarch and the only patriarchal locum tenens named by Patriarch Tikhon who was in freedom at that time. In view of the very ruthless behaviour now displayed by Metropolitan Sergius, it seems likely that he deliberately decided to hide the information about Metropolitan Agathangel's return from Metropolitan Peter.

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[57] Grabbe, op. cit., p. 61.

[58] Savelev, op. cit., p. 200.

[59] Hieromonk Damascene (Orlovsky), "Zhizneopisanie patriarshego mestobliustitelia mitropolita Petra Krutitskago (Polianskogo)" (Biography of the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Peter (Poliansky) of Krutitsa), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), № 166, III-1992, pp. 213-242.

[60] Gubonin, op. cit., p. 454.

In fact, with the appearance of Metropolitan Agathangel the claims of *both* the Grigorians *and* Sergius to supreme power in the Church collapsed. But Sergius, having tasted of power, was not about to relinquish it so quickly; and just as Metropolitan Agathangel's rights as locum tenens were swept aside by the renovationists in 1922, so now the same hierarch was swept aside again by the former renovationist Sergius. The chronology of events reveals how the leadership of the Russian Church was usurped for the second time…

On April 30, Sergius wrote to Agathangel rejecting his claim to the rights of the patriarchal locum tenens on the grounds that Peter had not resigned his post. In this letter Sergius claims that he and Peter had exchanged opinions on Agathangel's letter in Moscow on April 22 – but neither Sergius nor Peter mention Agathangel in the letters they exchanged on that day and which are published by Gubonin.[61] Therefore it seems probable that Peter's decision not to resign his post was based on ignorance of Agathangel's appearance on the scene. Indeed, there can be little doubt that if he had known he would have immediately handed over the administration of the Church to Agathangel.

On May 13, Agathangel met Sergius in Moscow, where, according to Sergius, they agreed that if Peter's trial (for unlawfully handing over his authority to the Grigorians} ended in his condemnation, Sergius would hand over his authority to Agathangel. However, Sergius was simply playing for time, in order to win as many bishops as possible to his side. And on May 16, he again wrote to Agathangel, in effect reneging on his agreement of three days before: "If the affair ends with Metropolitan Peter being acquitted or freed, I will hand over to *him* my authority, while your eminence will then have to conduct discussions with Metropolitan Peter himself. But if the affair ends with his condemnation, you will be given the opportunity to take upon yourself the initiative of raising the question of bringing Metropolitan Peter to a church trial. When Metropolitan Peter will be given over to a trial, you can present your rights, as the eldest [hierarch] to the post of Deputy of Metropolitan Peter, and when the court will declare the latter deprived of his post, you will be the second candidate to the locum tenancy of the patriarchal throne after Metropolitan Cyril."[62]

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[61] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 454-57.

[62] Gubonin, op. cit., p. 461 (italics mine).

In other words, Sergius in a cunning and complicated way rejected Agathangel's claim to be the lawful head of the Russian Church, although this claim was now stronger than Metropolitan Peter's (because he was in prison and unable to rule the Church) and *much* stronger than Sergius'.

On May 20, Agathangel sent a telegram to Sergius: "You promised to send a project to the Bishops concerning the transfer to me of the authorizations of ecclesiastical power. Be so kind as to hurry up." On the same day Sergius replied: "Having checked your information, I am convinced that you have no rights; [I will send you] the details by letter. I ardently beseech you: do not take the decisive step." On May 21, Agathangel sent another telegram threatening to publish the agreement he had made with Sergius and which he, Sergius, had broken. On May 22, Sergius wrote to Peter warning him not to recognize Agathangel's claims (the letter, according to Hieromonk Damascene (Orlovsky), was delivered personally by Tuchkov, which shows which side the OGPU was on!). However, Peter ignored Sergius' warning and wrote to Agathangel on May 22 (and again on May 23), congratulating him on his assumption of the rights of patriarchal locum tenens and assuring him of his loyalty.

At this point Sergius' last real canonical grounds for holding on to power – the support of Metropolitan Peter – collapsed.[63] But Agathangel only received this letter on May 31, a (OGPU-engineered?) delay that proved to be decisive for the fortunes of the Russian Church. For on May 24, after Sergius had again written rejecting Agathangel's claims, the latter wrote: "Continue to rule the Church… For the sake of the peace of the Church I propose to resign the office of locum tenens."[64] On the same day Sergius, savagely pressing home his advantage, wrote to the administration of the Moscow diocese demanding that Agathangel be tried by the hierarchs then in Moscow. When Agathangel eventually received Peter's letter (which was confirmed by a third one dated June 9), he wrote to Sergius saying that he would send him a copy of the original and informing him that he had accepted the chancellery of the patriarchal locum tenens. And he asked him to come to Moscow so that he could take over power from him. But it was too late; Sergius was already in control of the Church's administration and refused to come to Moscow saying that he had signed a promise not to leave Nizhni-Novgorod (although he had gone to Moscow only two weeks before!). And on May 30 / June 12, in a letter to Metropolitan Peter, Agathangel finally renounced all claims to the locum tenancy.

Why did Metropolitan Agathangel renounce the post of locum tenens at this point? The reason he gave to Sergius was his poor health; but some further light is shed on this question by Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin), who wrote that when Metropolitan Agathangel returned from exile, "everyone began to come to him. Then Tuchkov with some archimandrite came to Agathangel and began to demand from him that he hand over his administration to Sergius. Metropolitan Agathangel did not agree to this. Then

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[63] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 462-64.

[64] Regelson, op. cit., pp. 404, 469.

Tuchkov told him that he would now go back into exile. Then Agathangel, because of his health and since he had already been three years in exile, resigned from the administration [the post of locum tenens] and left it to Peter of Krutitsa as the lawful [locum tenens] until the second candidate, Metropolitan Cyril, should return from exile. I heard about this when I personally went to him in Yaroslavl and he himself explained his situation to me. And he said that the canonical administration was now really in the hands of Cyril, and temporarily, until the return of Cyril, with Metropolitan Peter. He did not recognize Sergius or Gregory…"[65]

Bishop Peter goes on to write: "I asked him: 'What must we do in the future if neither Cyril nor Peter will be around? Who must we then commemorate?' He said: 'There is still the canonical Metropolitan Joseph, formerly of Uglich, who is now in Leningrad. He was appointed by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon as a candidate in case the Patriarch, I, Cyril and Anthony [Khrapovitsky] died.'" Bishop Peter for a time commemorated Metropolitan Agathangel as locum tenens.[66]

The astonishing extent of Sergius' usurpation of power is revealed in his fifth letter to Agathangel, dated June 13, in which he refused to submit even to Metropolitan Peter insofar as the latter, "having transferred to me, albeit temporarily, nevertheless in full, the rights and obligations of the locum tenens, and himself being deprived of the possibility of being reliably informed of the state of ecclesiastical affairs, can neither bear responsibility for the course of the latter, nor, a fortiori, meddle in their administration… I cannot look on the instructions of Metropolitan Peter that have come out of prison as other than instructions or, rather, *as the advice of a person without responsibility* [italics mine – V.M.]."

A sergianist source comments on this letter: "It turns out that, once having appointed a deputy for himself, Metropolitan Peter no longer had the right to substitute another for him, whatever he declared. This 'supple' logic, capable of overturning even common sense, witnessed to the fact that Metropolitan Sergius was not going to depart from power under any circumstances."[67]

Sergius also said that Agathangel was given over to a hierarchical trial for his anticanonical act, for greeting which Metropolitan Peter "himself becomes a participant in it and is also subject to punishment".[68] In other words, Sergius, though only Metropolitan Peter's deputy as locum tenens for as long as the latter recognized him as such, was not only usurping the rights of the full (and not simply deputy) locum tenens, but was also threatening to bring to trial, on the charge of attempting to usurp the locum tenancy, two out of the only three men who could canonically lay claim to the post![69]

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[65] Ladygin, "Kratkoe opisanie biografii menia nedostojnago skhiepiskopa Petra Ladygina" (Short Description of the Biography of me, the unworthy Schema-Bishop Peter Ladygin). *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), №№ 7-8, July-August, 1985, p. 200.

[66] Tsypin, op. cit., p. 56.

[67] *Za Khrista Postradavshie* (Those Who Suffered for Christ), Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1997, p. 36.

[68] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 477-478.

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[69] Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin), who later became one of the leaders of the Catacomb Church, had a different account of these events, which still more clearly incriminated Sergius (op. cit., pp. 152-53).

8. DIVISIONS WITHIN ROCOR

In 1926, sharp differences of opinion began to emerge between the first two members of the ROCOR Synod, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov) of Poltava. One of these, we have seen, concerned the new calendar, on which Archbishop Theophan took an uncompromising position, considering the new calendarists to be schismatics, while Metropolitan Anthony accepted them (including the new calendarist Church of Poland, which had broken away from the Russian Church). Another, still more important dispute concerned the Church's teaching on redemption…

In 1926 there was published the second edition of Metropolitan Anthony's *Dogma of Redemption*, an attempt to conceptualise the mystery of salvation by means of a sharp contrast between redemption understood as an act of supremely compassionate love in which the satisfaction of justice played no significant role, on the one hand, and redemption understood as unquestionably an act motivated by love but aiming essentially towards the satisfaction of God's justice, being a sacrifice of God the Son to the Holy Trinity, the so-called "juridical theory", on the other. The "juridical theory" was rejected by Metropolitan Anthony as "scholastic", although it is the standard model of redemption to be found in the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Fathers and the Divine service-books of the Orthodox Church. According to him, the satisfaction of the justice of God was a "secondary, incidental aspect" of redemption; he sought to disengage, as it were, God's justice from His love in the economy of salvation. In fact, our salvation, according to Metropolitan Anthony, was not accomplished by a restoration of justice between God and man, but simply through an outpouring of Christ's compassionate love for man, as shown particularly in the Garden of Gethsemane, onto the whole of mankind. Metropolitan Anthony's theory of redemption had already been sharply criticized before the revolution by Archbishop Victor of Vyatka, and had other critics in the Catacomb Church such as Archbishop Demetrius of Gdov and Hieromonk Theodore Andreyev.

Archbishop Theophan, supported by his vicar, Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev), disagreed with the metropolitan.[70] He considered the so-called "juridical theory" to be Orthodox, and Metropolitan Anthony's views on both redemption and original sin to be not Orthodox (he refrained from using the word "heretical"). While agreeing that God's motivation was always, and supremely, love, Archbishop Theophan could not agree that justice was secondary and incidental to our salvation, insofar as salvation consists in the destruction of the sin that separates us from God, which was achieved through the restoration of justice between God and man through the Sacrifice on the Cross. Nor could he agree with the metropolitan's attempt to reduce the importance of Golgotha by comparison with Gethsemane.

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[70] Another Russian hierarch who disagreed with Metropolitan Anthony's views in this period was Archbishop, latr Metropolitan Eleutherius of Lithuania. His eight letters were published together in his book, *Ob Iskuplenii* (On the Redemption), Paris, 1937.

The issue first came to a head in a session of the Synod held in April, 1926. On the one hand, the Synod expressed its approval of Metropolitan Anthony's *Catechism*. On the other hand, no decision was made to replace the *Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, the standard Catechism of the Russian Church, which Metropolitan Anthony criticised as "scholastic" but which Archbishop Theophan considered completely Orthodox.

Metropolitan Anthony's views were also condemned by an official representative of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Protopriest Milosh Parenta, who wrote in that Church's official organ: "When Metropolitan Anthony approaches a scientific-theological review and explanation of the dogmas, then either he insufficiently comprehends them, or he cannot avoid the temptation of, and enthusiasm for, modernism. The explanation of the dogma of Redemption offered by the author in his work openly destroys the teaching on this truth faithfully preserved by the Orthodox Church, and with it the Christian Religion itself, because the truth of the redemption together with the truth of Christ's incarnation is its base and essence". To which the editor added: "However, it is necessary to recognize that it is very difficult to analyse this work of the author, because in it there are often no definite and clear concepts, although there are many extended speeches which hide the concepts or say nothing, and because in part there are no logical connections in it, nor any strictly scientific exposition, nor systematic unity."[71]

The dispute rumbled on. Thus in letters to Hieroschemamonk Theodosius of Mount Athos, a theologian who took the side of Archbishop Theophan, Metropolitan Anthony expressed the suspicion that Archbishop Theophan was in "spiritual delusion", and continued to reject "the juridical theory of Anselm and Aquinas, completely accepted by P[eter] Moghila and Metropolitan Philaret". And again he wrote: "We must not quickly return to Peter Moghila, Philaret and Macarius: they will remain subjects for historians".

For his part, Archbishop Theophan was unhappy that Metropolitan Anthony did not abandon what his mistaken views on redemption, but only refrained from pressing for their official acceptance by the Synod. As he wrote on February 16/29, 1932: "Under the influence of the objections made [against his work], Metropolitan Anthony was about to take back his *Catechism*, which had been introduced by him into use in the schools in place of Metropolitan Philaret's *Catechism*. But, as became clear later, he did this insincerely, and with exceptional persistence continued to spread his incorrect teaching *On Redemption* and many other incorrect teachings contained in his *Catechism*."

The general approach taken thereafter towards Metropolitan Anthony's *Dogma* was not to dispute it openly, and in any case not to call it a heresy.[72]

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[71] *Herald of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate*, 1926, № II (1/14 June), pp. 168-174 (10-34).

[72] For example, Abbot Herman of Platina wrote that Archbishop John (Maximovich) "differed theologically [from Metropolitan Anthony] although he personally loved and was devoted to him. In the early part of this century, Metropolitan Anthony had formulated a false 'Dogma of Redemption' based on the notion that our redemption was possible without the Cross. This teaching was promulgated by Metropolitan

An attempt to have it published again in Canada in the early 1970s was successfully foiled through the efforts of ROCOR hierarchs Averky, Andrew, Athanasius and Nektary (although it was published later in English).[73]

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Archbishop Theophan and Bishop Seraphim again cooperated fruitfully in the struggle that ensued between the leadership of ROCOR and its West European diocese of ROCOR under Metropolitan Evlogy. The quarrel centred around the foundation of the St. Sergius Theological Institute in Paris, which was largely inspired and financed by a Masonic organization, the YMCA.[74] The St. Sergius Institute became the breeding ground of a circle of heterodox theologians known as "the Paris school", whose leading lights were Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, Nicholas Berdyaev, Semyon Frank, Lev Zander, Nicholas Lossky and Nicholas Zernov.

The Paris theologians were both theologically and politically liberal. Berdyaev, for example, "asserted that the struggle with communism was not pleasing to God and antichristian. Berdyaev was echoed by the no less 'Orthodox' [Semyon Ludwigovich] Frank, who, while attacking 'the idol of politics' and recognizing that the Bolsheviks were 'not pleasing to God', at the same time insisted that 'hatred for the Bolsheviks', as well as politics directed at their overthrow, was as displeasing to God as 'the idol of the revolution' itself."[75]

Anthony's followers more strongly than by the Metropolitan himself, but Archbishop John, in spite of all his love for his Abba and his Abba's love for him, did not share it. For this, the followers of Metropolitan Anthony among the hierarchs could not forgive Archbishop John… I remember once, when Archbishop John came to our store, we asked him what this teaching of the Dogma of Redemption was all about and whether it was an outright heresy. To this Archbishop John shrugged his shoulders and said, 'No, not really,' and began all of a sudden to talk about Blessed Augustine of Hippo, whose writings, like those of Metropolitan Anthony, contained theological imprecisions. After this discussion which Fr. Seraphim and I had with Archbishop John, Fr. Seraphim concluded that if you can forgive the theological imprecisions of Blessed Augustine, then you can forgive Metropolitan Anthony. But if you do not forgive Blessed Augustine and dismiss him as a heretic, you must do the same with Metropolitan Anthony." (http://saintjohnwonderworker.org/sanc05.htm).

[73] "Bishop Andrew [Rymarenko] of Rockland was a firm, but tactful opponent of the false teaching of Metr. Anthony (Khrapovitsky) on the 'Dogma of Redemption'… When this teaching surfaced again in the Church Abroad, under Metropolitan Philaret, a whole group of the best hierarchs, not wishing to offend the first-hierarch, asked Archbishop Andrew, as the spiritual father of the metropolitan himself, to remove this subject from the agenda of the 1972 Council, so as to prevent a schism. When the danger had passed through the efforts of Bishops Nectarius, Athanasius and Averky, Bishop Andrew crossed himself, thanking God that Orthodoxy had been preserved for the Americans." ("Batiushka O. Adrian" (Batiushka Fr. Adrian), Russkij Palomnik (The Russian Pilgrim), № 18, 1998, p. 105)

[74] Donald E. Davies, "The American YMCA and the Russian emigration", *Sobornost*, 9:1, 1987, pp. 24-41.

[75] Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, p. 110.

Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, p. 110.

The Paris theologians were supported by Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris, and they in turn supported him. This symbiotic relationship, combined with the intrigues of the communists, laid the basis for the schism of the "Paris exarchate" from the Russian Church Abroad. The beginning of the schism was discernible in the session of ROCOR's Hierarchical Council of June 30, 1926. Archbishop Theophan read a report linking the YMCA with Masonry, and the St. Sergius Theological Institute with the YMCA. In the same report Vladyka exposed the ecumenist teachings of several teachers at the Institute, including Bulgakov, Kartashev, Berdyaev and Zenkovsky. Then the question arose of separating the German diocese into a separate diocese from Metropolitan Evlogy's West European diocese. Evlogy rebelled, insisting that either he was given autonomous rights in Western Europe or he would separate from the Synod. Not receiving the agreement of the other bishops, he went into schism, taking all his vicar-bishops and parishes with him. About sixty clergy, the majority in Western Europe, followed him into schism.[76]

Archbishop Averky writes: "Archbishop Theophan was the first to expose and document the anti-Christian nature of certain so-called Christian organizations, some of which were eager to extend their influence to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and even to subjugate it to themselves somewhat by rendering financial assistance much needed by our refugees who had no stable sources of their own to draw from in exile. Vladyka Theophan himself categorically refused to accept the monthly allowance offered to him by these organizations, and did not approve of those who did, for he believed that this caused them to lose their spiritual freedom, and that in one way or another they would consequently be forced to do the will of their sponsors. Vladyka Theophan guarded his independence and spiritual freedom, preferring a beggarly existence to a secure situation. This discloses the most characteristic trait of our great pastor, a trait that he shared with the great Fathers of Christian antiquity: any compromise of conscience, no matter how small, was for him altogether inconceivable. In all of his actions and conduct, in his private life as well as in his service to the Church and society, he was utterly constant, never departing in any way from what his convictions dictated. Absolute incorruptibility, uncompromising honesty and straightforwardness, demand for unconditional loyalty to the true Church, to the Word of God, and to Patristic tradition – these were his hallmarks, ideals which guided his life and which he liked to see in other servants of the Church as well."[77]

In August, 1926, Archbishop Theophan wrote: "The real causes of the division are deeper than would appear at first glance. Two of them are especially significant. 'They' consider the Soviet authorities as 'ordained by God', but we consider them antichristian. On the basis of overwhelming documentary evidence, we recognized that the YMCA is a masonic organization. They consider it a Christian organization." And he predicted: "Metropolitan Evlogy will not give in. Those around him are pushing him toward schism. We could let him have his way, but we cannot entrust the fate of Orthodoxy to him. He is ensnared in the nets of the YMCA. The YMCA in turn is having a demoralizing effect on student groups. In the magazine *The Way* № 5, Professor Berdyaev stated openly that the schism in the church is unavoidable and necessary. Metropolitan Evlogy is the only hierarch who 'has raised his consciousness to the realization that it is necessary to reform Orthodoxy', and he is therefore 'a tool of God's Providence' in our days!"[78]

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[76] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 154; Zhukov, op. cit., p. 114.

[77] Archbishop Averky (Taushev), *Vysokopreosviaschennij Feofan, Arkhiepiskop Poltavskij i Pereiaslavskij* (His Eminence Theophan, Archbishop of Poltava and Pereiaslavl), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1974.

However, Archbishop Theophan was not finding the support that he might have expected from Metropolitan Anthony. He protested against the publication of an epistle of Metropolitan Anthony dated July 22, 1926 to the secretary of the Russian Student Christian Movement, L. Liperovsky, which said that it was not forbidden to be an official of the YMCA.[79]

Again, on February 29, 1927 he wrote a report to the ROCOR Synod to which he attached two reports of the "Russian Patriotic Society" and a report of four laymen protesting against the letter of Metropolitan Anthony published in *Vozrozhdenie*: "The clear and categorical resolution of the Council of 1926 on the YMCA was violated soon after the end of this Council not only by Metropolitan Eulogius together with the bishops subject to him (Archbishop Vladimir, Archbishop Seraphim and Bishop Benjamin), but also by the president of the Council himself, Metropolitan Anthony, as also by Archbishop Anastasy who followed his example. Believing Orthodox people were particularly disturbed by the written declarations on this question by the president of the Council Metropolitan Anthony which were published in the newspaper *Vozrozhdenie* (22 July, 1926 and 10 September, 1926) and in № 10 of the *Vestnik Russkogo Studencheskogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia*, in which he calls the resolution of the Council of 1926 with regard to the YMCA a simple 'repetition of the response of the Council of 1921' and based on the Council member's 'small knowledge' of this question (letter of June 22, 1926 printed in the newspaper *Vozrozhdenie*. According to the witness of the composers of the Paris report, this kind of declaration of the president of the Council with regard to the resolution of the Council of 1926 on the question of the YMCA 'is now interpreted by everyone as nothing other than a juridical annulment of their meaning and significance' (pp. 9-10). On their side, the composers of the reports find that the president of the Council does not have the right to make declarations in the press annulling the meaning and significance of conciliar resolutions, both in general and in particular with regard to this question, and ask the Synod to confirm and, if possible, clarify the true meaning of the conciliar resolutions on the given question. Moreover, they declare that if they find no support in their struggle for the purity of Orthodoxy in the Synod, they will be forced 'to seek, with the pastors faithful to Orthodoxy, ways of saving the Russian Church without the Synod and even in spite of it (Paris report, p. 16), following the example of the brotherhoods of the South-West of Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries…"[80]

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[78] Helen Kontzevich wrote: "in Paris, Archpriest Sergius Chetverikov asked to come and see Archbishop Theophan, to converse with him on the theme of the Jesus Prayer. But he was presented with the condition that he cease all contact with the YMCA. The Archpriest did not agree to it."

[79] "… A regional Orthodox Council, uniting personally and through letters 32 hierarchs in three parts of the world, cannot officially give its blessing to any institution other than those which call themselves Orthodox; but it has not forbidden its flock to be members of the YMCA society, and has not approved only of their remaining under its spiritual leadership as being an institution which, although Christian, is inter-confessional; but the Council has not forbidden serving in this society in the capacity of its officials, nor has it forbidden participation in its publishing houses, in which I have taken part, since in the last four or five years I have not found any anti-Orthodox propaganda either in the publications of the Society or in the Paris Theological institute that is subsidised by it, or in its relationship to Russian young people… As regards the attitude of the Council to the YMCA itself, that was, naturally, a repetition of the attitude of the Council of 1921; since then a significant evolution has taken place in the Society, but this was so little known to the Council that I, while knowing about it, could not impose my convictions on my brother hierarchs, to whose Council you wrote requesting its blessing; I hope that your activity, growing and entering into the life of the Orthodox Church will, by the time of later Councils, dispose them to complete trust and sympathy towards your movement." (*Vozrozhdenie* (Regeneration), September 10, 1926, p. 2; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 156)

Vladyka Theophan "warned and admonished, but his warnings were not heeded in time and the subsequent reproach of those who broke away [Evlogy of Paris and Plato of America] not only had no positive results, but even deepened the division, as Vladyka had also foreseen. Such ecclesiastical schisms and divisions caused Vladyka to sorrow in his heart, to suffer in his soul and to grieve. Although he had at the very beginning identified the root of the problem, he did not always approve of the measures taken to stop the schisms and establish unity in the Church, and he indicated the errors sometimes made in so doing."[81]

Archbishop Seraphim of Finland wrote: "… If relations with Russia are impossible, then the dioceses abroad are canonically bound to have a temporary ecclesiastical authority, which was indicated by the Synod and Patriarch of Moscow in 1920 [in ukaz № 362]. In addition, I cannot understand why Metropolitan Evlogy, alone of all the diocesan hierarchs abroad, should continually have bad relations with the [ROCOR] Synod and threatens to make a schism (he has written about this to me many times). All the other hierarchs – of Japan, of China and of Harbin, and I, who rule the Finnish Church, have all voluntarily and peacefully submitted to the Councils and the Synod, although I, for example, am not bound to do this. After all, Metropolitan Eulogius is the same as all the other diocesan hierarchs, and the whole of the Church Abroad has never been subject to him. He was given to rule only the abroad part of the Petrograd diocese, and nothing more, and he can in no way be considered the head of the Church Abroad. I, for example, have occupied a more lofty see than all the other hierarchs, but I have never striven towards disunity or disobedience to the Synod…"[82]

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[80] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 162.

[81] Archbishop Averky, op. cit.

[82] *Tserkovnie Vedomosti*, 1927, №№ 5-6, pp. 5, 6, 10; in G.M. Soldatov, *Arkhierejskie Sobory Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej 1938-1939 g.* (Hierarchical Councils of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, 1938-1939), Minneapolis: AARDM Press, 2003, pp. 10-11.

On January 26, 1927 the ROCOR Synod suspended Metropolitan Evlogy and his vicar bishops pending an ecclesiastical trial that was to take place at the next Council. On February 4, the Synod sent a circular letter to all the parishes in the Diocese of Western Europe in which it announced its decision of January 26 and exhorted the faithful not to commune with the suspended Metropolitan, bearing in mind that the validity of the Mysteries received might be placed in doubt.

On September 8, the Council of Bishops convened an Episcopal Tribunal comprising twelve bishops to judge the case of Evlogy. He was condemned, and the Act of Sentence read, in part: "Every liturgical function performed by him is devoid of grace, the Mysteries administered by him are not Mysteries, and the ordinations he performs are anticanonical."

The Council again appealed to the clergy of the Western European diocese, threatening them with canonical penalties, and Archbishop Seraphim, in the name of the Council, wrote a declaration to all the faithful of the Western European diocese that "it is absolutely forbidden, under pain of excommunication for schism, to remain in prayerful communion with Metropolitan Evlogy, Archbishop Vladimir, Bishop Sergius and their clergy, since the Mysteries administered by them are devoid of benefit."[83]

Unfortunately, Evlogy was under the strong influence of the Paris theologians, who supported him as he supported them. They encouraged him to remain in schism from ROCOR, knowing that ROCOR saw through their heretical ideas.

The most notorious of these ideas was Fr. Sergius Bulgakov's heresy about the mythological, quasi-divine figure of Sophia, which was based, according to Archbishop Theophan in a letter written in 1930, "on the book of Fr. [Paul] Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*. But Florensky borrowed the idea of Sophia from V.S. Soloviev. And V.S. Soloviev borrowed it from the medieval mystics.

"In V.S. Soloviev Sophia is the feminine principle of God, His 'other'. Florensky tries to prove that Sophia, as the feminine principle of God, is a special substance. He tries to find this teaching in St. Athanasius the Great and in Russian iconography. Protopriest Bulgakov accepts on faith the basic conclusions of Florensky, but partly changes the form of this teaching, and partly gives it a new foundation. In Bulgakov this teaching has two variants: a) originally it is a special Hypostasis, although not of one essence with the Holy Trinity (in the book *The Unwaning Light*), b) later it is not a Hypostasis but 'hypostasisness'. In this latter form it is an energy of God coming from the essence of God through the Hypostases of the Divinity into the world and finding for itself its highest 'created union' in the Mother of God. Consequently, according to this variant, Sophia is not a special substance, but the Mother of God.

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[83] Archpriest Alexander Lebedev, "Re: the debate on grace", orthodox_synod@indiana.edu, May 5, 1998.

"According to the Church teaching, which is especially clearly revealed in St. Athanasius the Great, the Sophia-Wisdom of God is the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Here, in the most general terms, is the essence of Protopriest Bulgakov's teaching on Sophia! To expound any philosophical teaching shortly is very difficult, and so it is difficult to expound shortly the teaching of the 'sophianists' on Sophia. This teaching of theirs becomes clear only in connection the whole of their philosophical system. But to expound the latter shortly is also impossible. One can say only: their philosophy is the philosophy of 'panentheism', that is, a moderate form of 'pantheism'. The originator of this 'panentheism' in Russia is V.S. Soloviev."

In 1935 both the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR condemned Sophianism as heretical, which forced Metropolitan Eulogius to create a commission to investigate Bulgakov's teaching. Although the majority of the commission members were supporters of Bulgakov, the metropolitan also appointed to it Fr. Georges Florovsky, the foremost "conservative" at the institute, who was known to be opposed to Bulgakov's teaching.

"Up to the time of the commission," writes Andrew Blane, "each had expounded his views through lectures and writings, neither apparently inclined to rebut directly the opinions of the other. The closest that Florovsky had come to open reproach was his 'harsh review' in 1930 of a belated Western language edition of Father Pavel Florensky's 'psychological esoteric' Sophian book on the Church,' whose exposition was known to be generally aking to that promulgated by Bulgakov. Now as a member of the Metropolitan's investigative commission, Florovsky could no longer avoid open assessment of Father Bulgakov's Sophiological speculations. His conclusion was that however mistaken those views were, they could not be judged heretical. To begin with, Bulgakov had made no effort 'to substitute his teaching for the teaching of the Church.' And although '… a theologian is, of course, responsible,… theology should not be taken, or mistaken, for Church doctrine. I, for one,' continued Father Georges, 'would repudiate and reject critically the contentions of Bulgakov… And Zenkovsky never concealed that he said that the starting point of the whole theological system of Bulgakov was wrong… but it is a theological dispute.' Another member of the commission, Father Chetverikov, took the same stance: 'erroneous, yes; heretical, no.' The other commission members, said Father Georges, were either of the view there was insufficient substance for the matter to be decreed a theological error, much less heresy, or that the whole matter was the artefact of ecclesiastical intrigue, and thereby called for full exoneration.

"The commission's deliberations, according to Florovsky, were supposed to proceed in secrecty to assure a full airing of opinions, but regrettably the gist of the various members' views became known to the Paris emigration on the morrow after the very first meeting. Without access to the details and nuances of the discussions, the wider public tended to view Florovsky's and Chetverikov's reluctance to absolve Bulgakov without some qualification as a veiled attempt to brand him a heretic. The remainder of the story as reported by Father Georges is equally unhappy: the majority never submitted its report, and it has never been explained why; a minority report, belatedly prepared by Father Chetverikov, with his and Florovsky's signatures, was later turned over to the Metropolitan. The bishops of the Church were then assembled to consider the case, and a retractio was asked of Father Bulgakov. He complied, and so far as his jurisdictional superiors were concerned, the matter was closed."[84]

However, Bulgakov continued to be popular in Paris, and the influence of the Paris school in general continued to vitiate Russian Orthodox life for several decades to come. Florovsky, meanwhile, was forced to spend less and less time in Paris. Eventually he emigrated to America...

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[84] Blane, *Georges Florovsky*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993, pp. 66-67.

9. THE CHURCH DECENTRALIZED

On June 7, 1926 a group of bishops imprisoned in the former monastery of Solovki in the White Sea issued an epistle that squarely faced up to the problems of Church-State relations: "The signatories of the present declaration are fully aware of how difficult the establishment of mutually reliable relations between the Church and the State in the conditions of present-day actuality are, and they do not consider it possible to be silent about it. It would not be right, it would not correspond to the dignity of the Church, and would therefore be pointless and unpersuasive, if they began to assert that between the Orthodox Church and the State power of the Soviet republics there were no discrepancies of any kind. But this discrepancy does not consist in what political suspicion wishes to see or the slander of the enemies of the Church points to. The Church is not concerned with the redistribution of wealth or in its collectivization, since She has always recognized that to be the right of the State, for whose actions She is not responsible. The Church is not concerned, either, with the political organization of power, for She is loyal with regard to the government of all the countries within whose frontiers She has members. She gets on with all forms of State structure from the eastern despotism of old Turkey to the republics of the North-American States. This discrepancy lies in the irreconcilability of the religious teaching of the Church with materialism, the official philosophy of the Communist Party and of the government of the Soviet republics which is led by it.

"The Church recognizes spiritual principles of existence; Communism rejects them. The Church believes in the living God, the Creator of the world, the Leader of Her life and destinies; Communism denies His existence, believing in the spontaneity of the world's existence and in the absence of rational, ultimate causes of its history. The Church assumes that the purpose of human life is in the heavenly fatherland, even if She lives in conditions of the highest development of material culture and general well-being; Communism refuses to recognize any other purpose of mankind's existence than terrestrial welfare. The ideological differences between the Church and the State descend from the apex of philosophical observations to the region of immediately practical significance, the sphere of ethics, justice and law, which Communism considers the conditional result of class struggle, assessing phenomena in the moral sphere exclusively in terms of utility. The Church preaches love and mercy; Communism – camaraderie and merciless struggle. The Church instils in believers humility, which elevates the person; Communism debases man by pride. The Church preserves chastity of the body and the sacredness of reproduction; Communism sees nothing else in marital relations than the satisfaction of the instincts. The Church sees in religion a life-bearing force which does not only guarantee for men his eternal, foreordained destiny, but also serves as the source of all the greatness of man's creativity, as the basis of his earthly happiness, sanity and welfare; Communism sees religion as opium, inebriating the people and relaxing their energies, as the source of their suffering and poverty. The Church wants to see religion flourish; Communism wants its death. Such a deep contradiction in the very basis of their Weltanschauungen precludes any intrinsic approximation or reconciliation between the Church and the State, as there cannot be any between affirmation and negation, between yes and no, because the very soul of the Church, the condition of Her existence and the sense of Her being, is that which is categorically denied by Communism.

"The Church cannot attain such an approximation by any compromises or concessions, by any partial changes in Her teaching or reinterpretation of it in the spirit of Communism. Pitiful attempts of this kind were made by the renovationists: one of them declared it his task to instil into the consciousness of believers the idea that Communism is in its essence indistinguishable from Christianity, and that the Communist State strives for the attainment of the same aims as the Gospel, but by its own means, that is, not by the power of religious conviction, but by the path of compulsion. Others recommended a review of Christian dogmatics in such a way that its teaching about the relationship of God to the world would not remind one of the relationship of a monarch to his subjects and would rather correspond to republican conceptions. Yet others demanded the exclusion from the calendar of saints 'of bourgeois origin' and their removal from church veneration. These attempts, which were obviously insincere, produced a profound feeling of indignation among believing people.

"The Orthodox Church will never stand upon this unworthy path and will never, either in whole or in part, renounce her teaching of the Faith that has been winnowed through the holiness of past centuries, for one of the eternally shifting moods of society…"[85]

On June 10, Metropolitan Sergius issued an address to the archpastors, pastors and flock of the Russian Church in the same spirit, noting that there were certain irreconcilable differences between the Church and the State. At the same time, however, he argued for the necessity of the Church being legalized by the State: "The lack of free registration for our church government bodies is creating for the hierarchy many practical inconveniences, imparting to its activities a kind of secret and even conspiratorial character, which, in turn, generates all sorts of misunderstandings and suspicion. And he went on: "On receiving the right to a legal existence, we clearly take account of the fact that, together with rights, obligations are also laid upon us in relation to those authorities that give us these rights. And I have now taken upon myself, in the name of the whole of our Orthodox Old-Church hierarchy and flock, to witness before Soviet power to our sincere readiness to be completely law-abiding citizens of the Soviet Union, loyal to its government and decisively setting ourselves apart from all political parties and undertakings directed to the harm of the Union. But let us be sincere to the end. We cannot pass over in silence the contradictions which exist between us Orthodox people and the Bolshevik-Communists who govern our Union. They see their task to be the struggle against God and His authority in the hearts of the people, while we see the significance and aim of our entire existence in the confession of faith in God as well as in the widest dissemination and affirmation of that faith in the hearts of the people. They accept only the materialistic conception of history, while we believe in Divine Providence, in miracles, etc. Far from promising reconciliation of that which is irreconcilable and from pretending to adapt our Faith to Communism, we will remain from the religious point of view what we are, that is, Old Churchmen or, as they call us, Tikhonites…"[86]

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[85] Regelson, op. cit., pp. 417-20.

With regard to the émigré bishops, who were, as we have seen, among the most anti-Soviet of the Russian bishops, Metropolitan Sergius kept to the same position as his predecessors, rejecting the possibility of taking any sanctions against them: "We cannot assume punitive functions and apply ecclesiastical punishments for vengeance… To inflict ecclesiastical punishment upon the émigré clergy for their disloyalty to the Soviet Union would be wholly inappropriate and would give unnecessary occasion for people to speak of the Soviet regime compelling us to do so."

A little later some ROCOR bishops asked Metropolitan Sergius to mediate in the dispute between their Synod and Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris, who refused to recognize the Synod's authority. In his reply of September 12, 1926, Sergius refused "to be a judge in a case of which I know absolutely nothing… And in general, can the Moscow Patriarchate be the leader of the life of Orthodox émigrés?" No, he replied. And he called on the émigré bishops to create a single "central organ of Church administration which would be sufficiently authoritative to resolve all misunderstandings and differences, and which would have the power to cut off all disobedience, without recourse to our support. For grounds will always be found to suspect the authenticity of our instructions."[87]

And again in its letter of April, 1927, Sergius' Synod said that to govern the Orthodox dioceses which have arisen abroad "from Moscow is in the ecclesiastical sense impossible due to the lack of legal forms of relations with them", demonstrating in detail that the Moscow Ecclesiastical Authorities were unable to judge the hierarchs abroad because the canons did not permit an ecclesiastical trial for political crimes, and also because it was impossible formally to organize a correct canonical court."[88]

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[86] Tsypin, op. cit., p. 59; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 474. Cf. Fr. Alexander Mazyrin, "Legalizing the Moscow Patriarchate in 1927: The Secret Aims of the Authorities", *Social Science: A Quarterly Journal of the Russian Academy of Sciences,* no. 1, 2009, p. 3. The article was first published in Russian in *Otechestvennaia Istoria*, no. 4, 2008.

[87] Grabbe, op. cit., p. 154; Holy Transfiguration Monastery, *A History of the Russian Church Abroad*, pp. 61-62; Pospielovksy, "Mitropolit Sergij i raskoly sprava" (Metropolitan Sergius and the schisms from the right), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), № 158, I-1990, p. 65.

[88] Bishop Gregory Grabbe, "Toward a History of the Ecclesiastical Divisions within the Russian Diaspora", chapter IV, *Living Orthodoxy*, #83, vol. XIV, № 5, September-October, 1992, p. 27; quoting from S.V. Troitsky, *Pravda o Russkoj Tserkvi Na Rodine i Za Rubezhom* (The Truth about the Russian Church in the Homeland and in the Diaspora).

This letter is important as it constitutes a de facto recognition of ROCOR by the Moscow Patriarchate. That recognition was withdrawn only when ROCOR refused to accept Sergius' demand, in 1927, that her hierarchs swear loyalty to the Soviet Union…

The increasing divisions in the Church required the convening of a Church Council and the election of a lawful patriarch. This was the only possible way to solve the problem according to Orthodox tradition. But the Council had to take place in secret because of the authorities' obstructionist tactics.

"Such a secret Council," writes Sergius Shumilo, "took place de facto in 1926 by means of the collection of the signatures… The initiators of this secret election of a patriarch were Bishops Paulinus (Kroshechkin), Cornelius (Sobolev) and Athanasius (Sakharov), who relied on the support of the exiled Solovki bishops. Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) at first refused to support this initiative of the episcopate. However, the signatures of 25 bishops in support of the carrying out of the election of a patriarch were collected. Besides, this undertaking received the written support of the bishops in exile on Solovki. In such a situation Metropolitan Sergius was forced to submit to the opinion of the majority, although he declined from active support of this conciliar undertaking. As Archbishop Cornelius (Sobolev) witnessed concerning this: 'In my opinion, he [Metropolitan Sergius] was as it were not especially inclined to carry out the matter of the election of Cyril, but the situation and the canons obliged him to do this'.

"In the absence of lawful ecclesiastical power the growing disagreements between Metropolitan Agathangelus, Metropolitan Sergius, Archbishop Gregory and others, the carrying out of a secret Council and election at it of a canonical head of the Russian Church seemed the only exist from the dead-end that had emerged. Bishop Paulinus (Kroshechkin) clarified his actions as follows: 'In view of the worrying situation of the Church it was desirable to begin the matter of the election of a patriarch'… By November, 1926 72 signatures had collected in support of the election of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan as the all-Russian patriarch.

"However, the conciliar will of the episcopate of the Russian Church was simply not realized in life because of the opposition of Soviet power. During the final phase of the elective process two participants in the secret collection of signatures [messengers of Bishop Paulinus] were unexpectedly arrested. The OGPU now had in its hand almost all the documents of this enterprise that had not been sanctioned by the authorities, including election ballots with the signatures of bishops. The majority of the participants in the secret conciliar election were arrested and cast into prisons or camps. Metropolitan Cyril was also not allowed to execute his duties. On December 21, 1926 he was arrested by the organs of the OGPU and cast into prison for a new term (his term of exile had expired in the autumn of 1926). Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) was also arrested in connection with this affair. However, by contrast with the other hierarchs, he was very quickly released. As it turned out, the OGPU had been informed from the beginning about the secret elections of a patriarch and used this process for fresh repressions against the episcopate. There is an opinion that it was a planned provocation in which Metropolitan Sergius took part. But no confirmation of this version has yet been found…"[89]

On December 8 Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd took over as Peter's deputy, in accordance with the latter's will of one year before.[90] But Joseph was prevented from leaving Yaroslavl by the authorities, so he handed the leadership of the Church to his deputies: Archbishop Cornelius (Sobolev), Archbishop Thaddeus (Uspensky) and Archbishop Seraphim (Samoilovich) of Uglich. On December 29, Metropolitan Joseph was arrested, and on the same day Archbishop Seraphim wrote that he was taking upon himself the duties of the deputy of the patriarchal locum tenens.[91]

In the same month of December, 1926, Tuchkov proposed to Metropolitan Peter, who was in prison in Suzdal, that he renounce his locum tenancy. Peter refused, and then sent a message to everyone through a fellow prisoner that he would "never under any circumstances leave his post and would remain faithful to the Orthodox Church to death itself".[92]

Then, on January 1, 1927, while he was in Perm on his way to exile on the island of Khe in Siberia, Metropolitan Peter confirmed Sergius as his deputy, being apparently unaware of the recent changes in the leadership of the Church.[93] Though he came to regret this decision, Metropolitan Peter was not able to revoke it officially from his remote exile. And Metropolitan Sergius now acted as if he did not exist…

At the beginning of March, Archbishop Seraphim was summoned from Uglich to Moscow and interrogated for three days by the GPU. He was offered a Synod, and indicated who should be its members. Seraphim refused, and put forward his own list of names, which included Metropolitan Cyril.

"But he's in prison," they said.

"Then free him," said the archbishop.

The GPU then presented him with the familiar conditions for legalization.

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[89] Shumilo, *V Katakombakh* (In the Catacombs), Lutsk, 2011, pp. 36-38. According to the author of an anonymous work, the initiative for the election of Metropolitan Cyril came from Archbishop Hilarion(Troitsky), who was at that time in prison on Solovki. And, according to this version, it was Metropolitan Sergius who informed the authorities ("The way of the cross of his Eminence Athanasius Sakharov", in Regelson, op. cit., p. 406).

[90] Gubonin, op. cit., p. 422. Peter's choice of deputies was: Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Michael of the Ukraine, and Joseph of Rostov, in that order.

[91] If Archbishop Seraphim had not been in freedom, then, according to Metropolitan Joseph's epistle, the bishops were to govern their dioceses independently (Tsypin, op. cit., p. 86).

[92] Regelson, op. cit., p. 408.

[93] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 492-493.

Arfed Gustavson writes: "He refused outrightly without entering into discussions, pointing out that he was not entitled to decide such questions without the advice of his imprisoned superiors. When he was asked whom he would appoint as his executive deputy he is said to have answered that he would turn over the Church to the Lord Himself. The examining magistrate was said to have looked at him full of wonder and to have replied:

"'All the others have appointed deputies…'

"To this Seraphim countered: 'But I lay the Church in the hands of God, our Lord. I am doing this, so that the whole world may know what freedom Orthodox Christianity is enjoying in our free State.'"[94]

This was a decisive moment, for the central hierarch of the Church was effectively declaring the Church's decentralization…

And not before time. For with the imprisonment of the last of the three possible locum tenentes the last slender canonical basis for establishing a central administration for the Church before the convocation of a Local Council disappeared. But the communists would in no way allow the convocation of a Council... Now the system of deputies of the deputy of the locum tenens had no basis in Canon Law or precedent in the history of the Church. And if it was really the case that the Church could not exist without a first hierarch and central administration, then the awful possibility existed that with the fall of the first hierarch the whole Church would fall, too…

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[94] Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960; see N.A., op. cit., p. 18.

Another account of this dialogue was given by Archbishop Seraphim's senior subdeacon, Michael Nikolaevich Yaroslavsky: "For 100 days Vladyka Seraphim happened to rule the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church. This was in 1926. Metropolitan Sergius was in prison, everybody was in prison… And so, as he had been put in charge, Vladyka told me that at that time the authorities offered him, as the Primate of the Church, a Synod of bishops. He did not agree and immediately received three years in Solovki camp. He did not betray the Church, but… declared the autocephaly of each diocese, since each Church Primate was another candidate for prison…" (Tape recorded conversation with Protopriest Michael Ardov in 1983, *Church News*, vol. 13, № 11 (112), p. 6). According to the same source, Vladyka Seraphim mentioned Metropolitan Cyril. "But he is behind bars," Tuchkov said. "He is behind your bars, and you must release him," said Seraphim.

"According to a letter written by Archbishop Seraphim a few days after his Lubyanks interview, Tuchkov said to him 'at parting': 'We don't harbour evil thoughts; we are releasing you and assign to you Uglich as your place of residence; you can officiate wherever you want, but under no circumstances can you govern. You should neither appoint, nor transfer, nor dismiss, nor reward.' 'But what about enquiries from the dioceses, current affairs,' asked Archbishop Seraphim. 'You cannot stop life, it will claim its own.' 'Well, you can make purely formal replies. After all, you have declared autonomy. So what do you want? You have left no deputies. So you should act accordingly: you must not send around any papers on the new government system. You can write to the dioceses that "since I have refused to govern, you should manage on your own in your localities." But if it comes into your head to write something, send it to me with a trusted man, I'll look through it and give you my opinion…As for now, goodbye. We'll buy you a ticket and see you to the railway station. Go back to Uglich and sit there quietly.'" (in Mazyrin, op. cit., p. 4)

The communists also wanted a centralized administration; so Tuchkov now turned to Metropolitan Agathangel with the proposal that he lead the Church. He refused. Then he turned to Metropolitan Cyril with the same proposal. He, too, refused. The conversation between Tuchkov and Metropolitan Cyril is reported to have gone something like this:-

“If we have to remove some hierarch, will you help us in this?”

“Yes, if the hierarch appears to be guilty of some ecclesiastical transgression… In the contrary case, I shall tell him directly, ‘The authorities are demanding this of me, but I have nothing against you.’”

“No!” replied Tuchkov. “You must try to find an appropriate reason and remove him as if on your own initiative.”

To this the hierarch replied: “Evgeny Nikolayevich! You are not the cannon, and I am not the shot, with which you want to blow up our Church from within!”[95]

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[95] Regelson, op. cit., p. 413.

10. THE RELEASE OF METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

On March 20 / April 2, 1927 Metropolitan Sergius was released from prison on condition that he did not leave Moscow – although before his arrest he had not had the right to live in Moscow. However, the investigation of his case was not discontinued, showing that the authorities still wanted to keep him on a leash... Five days later, Archbishop Seraphim handed over to him the government of the Russian Church. And another six days later, on April 13, Metropolitan Sergius announced to Bishop Alexis (Gotovtsev), who was temporary administrator of the Moscow diocese, that he had assumed the post of deputy of the patriarchal locum tenens.[96]

Meanwhile, Bishop Athanasius (Sakharov) was given a three-year term on Solovki for "being a member of a group of hierarchs headed by Metropolitan Sergius".[97] But why, then, was not Metropolitan Sergius himself imprisoned? Why give privileges to the head of the group while exiling the members of the group? At the same time, on March 28, Metropolitan Cyril was given another term in exile – and it is clear from the court records that the main reason was his secret election as patriarch, which Metropolitan Sergius had organized.[98] Again, why was Cyril, who probably knew nothing about the election, exiled again, while Sergius, the organizer of the election, was released? Evidently Sergius had reached an agreement with the authorities, while Metropolitan Cyril had rejected any such agreement…

On May 16 Sergius asked the NKVD for permission to hold a preliminary meeting with six or seven hierarchs with a view to inviting them to become members of a Synod and then to petition the government for registration of the Synod. The NKVD immediately agreed, acknowledging receipt of one rouble for the certificate. "Thus a one-rouble certificate inaugurated the history of the legalized Moscow Patriarchate."[99]

On May 18 the meeting took place, and the hierarchs agreed to convert their meeting into a temporary Patriarchal Holy Synod. The members of this Synod, according to Archbishop Seraphim's subdeacon, were precisely those hierarchs that had been suggested to Archbishop Seraphim, but whom he had rejected…

On May 20, the OGPU officially recognized this Synod[100], which suggested that Metropolitan Sergius had agreed to the terms of legalization which Patriarch Tikhon and

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[96] Mazyrin, op. cit., p. 5. In later years, after Sergius' betrayal of the Church, Archbishop Seraphim is reported to have reasserted his rights as patriarchal locum tenens. See Michael Khlebnikov, "O tserkovnoj situatsii v Kostrome v 20-30-e gody" (On the Church Situation in Kostroma in the 20s and 30s), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 49, № 5 (569), May, 1997, p. 19.

[97] Gubonin, op. cit., p. 844.

[98] http://www.pstbi.ru/cgi-htm/db.exe/no_dbpath/docum/cnt/ans, "Kirill (Smirnov Konstantin Ilarionovich)".

[99] Mazyrin, op. cit., p. 6.

[100] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 163-164.

Metropolitan Peter had rejected. One of Sergius' closest supporters, Bishop Metrophanes of Aksaisk, had once declared that "the legalization of the church administration is a sign of heterodoxy". This legalization was certainly a sign of Sergius' heterodoxy…

We have seen Sergius' leading role in the first Church revolution in 1917 and in the second, renovationist one in 1922, when he officially declared the renovationists' Higher Church Authority to be "the only canonical, lawful supreme ecclesiastical authority, and we consider all the decrees issuing from it to be completely lawful and binding".[101] In 1923 Metropolitan Sergius had supported the renovationists' defrocking of Patriarch Tikhon as "a traitor to Orthodoxy". True, on August 27, 1923, he was forced to offer public repentance for his betrayal of Orthodoxy in renovationism. But as Hieromartyr Damascene later pointed out, he had not been in a hurry to offer repentance…

Moreover, as the Catholic writer Deinber points out, "the fact of the liberation of Metropolitan Sergius at this moment, when the repressions against the Church throughout Russia were all the time increasing, when his participation in the affair of the election of Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov), for which a whole series of bishops had paid with exile, was undoubted, immediately aroused anxiety, which was strengthened when, on April 9/22, 1927, Bishop Paulinus [Kroshechkin] was freed, and when, on April 25 / May 8, a Synod was unexpectedly convoked in Moscow. It became certain that between Metropolitan Sergius, during his imprisonment, and the Soviet government, i.e. the GPU, some sort of agreement had been established, which placed both him and the bishops close to him in a quite exceptional position relative to the others. Metropolitan Sergius received the right to live in Moscow, which right he had not enjoyed even before his arrest. When the names of the bishops invited to join the Synod were made known, then there could be no further doubts concerning the capitulation of Metropolitan Sergius before Soviet power. The following joined the Synod: Archbishop Sylvester (Bratanovsky) – a former renovationist; Archbishop Alexis Simansky – a former renovationist, appointed to the Petrograd see by the Living Church after the execution of Metropolitan Benjamin [Kazansky]; Archbishop Philip [Gumilevsky] – a former beglopopovets, i.e. one who had left the Orthodox Church for the sect of the beglopopovtsi; Metropolitan Seraphim [Alexandrov] of Tver, a man whose connections with the OGPU were known to all Russia and whom no-one trusted…"[102]

In any case, on May 25 Metropolitan Sergius and his "Patriarchal Holy Synod" now wrote to the bishops enclosing the OGPU document and telling them that their diocesan councils should now seek registration from the local organs of Soviet power. Some hierarchs hastened to have their diocesan administrations legalized. But as it turned out, the OGPU was in no hurry to register diocesan councils before their membership had been established to the OGPU's satisfaction… This was done, in the case of the Petrograd diocese, "to expose the enemies", as the Petrograd comrades explained to Tuchkov.[103]

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[101] *The Living Church*, №№ 4-5, 14 July, 1922; Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 218-19.

[102] Regelson, op. cit., p. 415; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 407.

[103] Mazyrin, op. cit., p. 10.

"In 1929," writes Fr. Alexander Mazyrin, "when the results were already obvious, [the Catacomb Church] Bishop Damascene (Tsedrik) wrote this in his 'Letter to the Legalized Ones': 'Fathers and brothers! While it is still not too late, do think and look into the essence of the 'legalization' that was graciously granted to you, lest you should later bitterly repent of the mistake that all of you with Metropolitan Sergius at your head are now committing! What you are accepting under the name of 'legalization' is, in essence, an act of bondage that guarantees you no rights whatsoever, while imposing upon you some grievous obligations. It would be naïve to expect anything other than that. The Communist Soviet Power is frank and consistent. It openly declared itself hostile to religion and set the destruction of the Church as its goal. It has never ceased from stating openly and clearly its theomachistic tasks through its top governmental representatives and all of its junior agents. This is why it is very naïve and criminal to believe that the so-called legalization by the Soviets is even partially seeking the good of the Church."[104]

In June, 1927 Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris directing him to sign a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet power. He agreed, "but on condition that the term 'loyalty' means for us the apoliticisation of the émigré Church, that is, we are obliged not to make the ambon a political arena, if this will relieve the difficult situation of our native Mother Church; but we cannot be 'loyal' to Soviet power: we are not citizens of the USSR, and the USSR does not recognise us as such, and therefore the political demand is from the canonical point of view non-obligatory for us…"[105]

On July 14, in ukaz № 93, Sergius demanded that all clergy abroad should sign a formal pledge to cease criticizing the Soviet government. He also stated that any clergyman abroad who refused to sign such would no longer be considered to be a part of the Moscow Patriarchate. This ukaz, which completely contradicted his previous ukaz of September 12, 1926, which blessed the hierarchs abroad to form their own independent administration, even included the actual text of the pledge that was to be signed: "I, the undersigned, promise that because of my actual dependence upon the Moscow Patriarchate, I will not permit myself in either my social activities nor especially in my Church work, any expression that could in the least way be considered as being disloyal with regard to the Soviet government."[106]

The clergy abroad were given until October 15 to sign this pledge. The ROCOR Council of Bishops, in their encyclical dated August 26, 1927, refused this demand and declared: "The free portion of the Church of Russia must terminate relations with the ecclesiastical administration in Moscow [i.e., with Metropolitan Sergius and his synod], in view of the fact that normal relations with it are impossible and because of its enslavement by the atheist regime, which is depriving it of freedom to act according to its own will and of freedom to govern the Church in accordance with the canons."[107]

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[104] Mazyrin, op. cit., p. 10.

[105] Tsypin, op. cit., p. 383.

[106] Protopriest Alexander Lebedeff, "Is the Moscow Patriarchate the 'Mother Church' of the ROCOR", Orthodox@ListServ. Indiana.Edu, 24 December, 1997.

On September 13, Metropolitan Eulogius wrote to Sergius asking that he be given autonomy. On September 24 Sergius replied with a refusal.[108]

The impossible demands that Sergius' appeal for loyalty to the Soviet Union placed on hierarchs living outside the Soviet Union was pointed out by the future hieromartyr, Archbishop John of Latvia, to Metropolitan Eleutherius of Lithuania: "As far as I know you, your co-pastors and flock, the question of loyalty to the USSR and the openly antitheist authorities in power there can be resolved sincerely by you only in a negative sense. But if you and your flock were not such as I know you to be, the confession of loyalty to the USSR and the authorities in power there would still be impossible for you from a juridical point of view. Both you and your co-pastors and flock are obliged under oath to be faithful citizens of the Lithuanian Republic. Simultaneous fidelity both to Lithuania and the USSR is juridically unthinkable. But even if it were not a question of loyalty in the sense of fidelity to the USSR where the 'appeal' [of Metropolitan Sergius] was born, but in the sense of benevolence towards the USSR, then all the same you, as a faithful son of Lithuania, cannot in the future and in all cases promise benevolence towards the USSR…"[109]

On July 5, 1928, the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR decreed: "The present ukaz [of Sergius] introduces nothing new into the position of the Church Abroad. It repeats the same notorious ukaz of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon in 1922, which was decisively rejected by the whole Church Abroad in its time."[110] In response to this refusal, Metropolitan Sergius expelled the hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad from membership of the Moscow Patriarchate. So the first schism between the Russian Church inside and outside Russia took place as a result of the purely political demands of Sergius' Moscow Patriarchate.

ROCOR's rejection of Sergius' demands was supported by the Solovki bishops: "The epistle threatens those church-servers who have emigrated with exclusion from the Moscow Patriarchate on the grounds of their political activity, that is, it lays an ecclesiastical punishment upon them for political statements, which contradicts the resolution of the All-Russian Council of 1917-18 of August 3/16, 1918, which made clear the canonical impermissibility of such punishments, and rehabilitated all those people who were deprived of their orders for political crimes in the past."[111]

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[107] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 171.

[108] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 172.

[109] "Pis'mo Sviaschennomuchenika Ioanna, arkhiepiskopa Rizhskago (1934 g.), arkhiepiskopu Litovskomu i Vilenskomu Elevferiu" (A Letter of Hieromartyr John, Archbishop of Riga (1934) to Archbishop Eleutherius of Lithuania and Vilnius), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'*, 676, August, 2008, pp. 30-31.

[110] Tsypin, op. cit., p. 384.

[111] Regelson, op. cit., p. 436; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 173.

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Meanwhile, ominous events were taking place in Georgia. “Between June 21 and 27, 1927,” writes Fr. Elijah Melia, “a Council elected as Catholicos Christopher Tsitskichvili. On August 6 he wrote to the Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III who replied addressing him as Catholicos. The new Catholicos entirely changed the attitude of the ecclesiastical hierarchy towards the Soviet power, officially declared militant atheist, in favour of submission and collaboration with the Government.”[112]

During a synodal session under the presidency of the new Catholicos, it was decided to introduce the new style into the Georgian Church. However, the reform was rejected by the people and the majority of the priests. So it fell through and was repealed within a few months.

All this, according to Boris Sokolov, took place under the influence of the head of the Georgian KGB, Laurence Pavlovich Beria, who wrote in 1929: “By our lengthy labours we succeeded in creating an opposition to Catholicos Ambrose and the then leading group in the Georgian Church, and… in January, 1927 we succeeded in completely wresting the reins of the government of the Georgian Church from the hands of Ambrose, and in removing him and his supporters from a leading role in the Georgian Church. In April, after the death of Catholicos Ambrose, Metropolitan Christopher was elected Catholicos. He is completely loyal to Soviet power, and already the Council that elected Christopher has declared its loyalty to the power and has condemned the politics and activity of Ambrose, and in particular, the Georgian emigration.”[113]

There followed, as Fr. Samson Zateishvili writes, “the persecution of clergy and believers, the dissolution of monasteries, the destruction of churches and their transformation into warehouses and cattle-sheds… The situation of the Church in Georgia was, perhaps, still more tragic and hopeless [than in the Russian Church], insofar as the new trials were imposed on old, unhealed wounds which remained from previous epochs.”[114]

In October, 1930, the future Archbishop Leontius of Chile wrote in his *Memoirs*: “I arrived in Tbilisi in the evening, and went straight with my letter to the cathedral church of Sion… The clergy of the cathedral were so terrified of the Bolsheviks that they were afraid to give me shelter in their houses and gave me a place to sleep in the cathedral itself.”[115]

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[112] Melia, "The Orthodox Church of Georgia", *A Sign of God: Orthodoxy 1964*, Athens: Zoe, 1964, p. 113.

[113] Monk Benjamin op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 5-6.

[114] Zateishvili, "Gruzinskaia Tserkov' i polnota pravoslavia" (The Georgian Church and the Fullness of Orthodoxy), in Bessmertny. and Filatov, op. cit., p. 422.

[115] A.B. Psarev, "Zhizneopisanie Arkhiepiskopa Leontia Chilijskogo (1904-1971 gg.)" (A Life of Archbishop Leontius of Chile (1904-1971), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), № 3 (555), March, 1996, p. 20.

11. THE DECLARATION OF METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

As if taking his cue from the Georgians, on July 16/29, Metropolitan Sergius issued the infamous Declaration that has been the basis of the existence of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate ever since, and which was to cause the greatest and most destructive schism in the history of the Orthodox Church since the fall of the Papacy in the eleventh century.

Several points should be noted in this document. First Sergius pretended that Patriarch Tikhon had always been aiming to have the Church legalized by the State, but had been frustrated by the émigré hierarchs and by his own death. There is a limited truth in this – but it was not the émigré hierarchs that frustrated the patriarch, nor did he want the kind of legalization Sergius wanted…

Sergius continued: "At my proposal and with permission from the State, a blessed Patriarchal Synod has been formed by those whose signatures are affixed to this document at its conclusion. Missing are the Metropolitan of Novgorod, Arseny, who has not arrived yet, and Archbishop Sebastian of Kostroma, who is ill. Our application that this Synod be permitted to take up the administration of the Orthodox All-Russian Church has been granted. Now our Orthodox Church has not only a canonically legal central administration but a central administration that is legal also according to the law of the State of the Soviet Union. We hope that this legalization will be gradually extended to the lower administrative units, to the dioceses and the districts. It is hardly necessary to explain the significance and the consequences of this change for our Orthodox Church, her clergy and her ecclesiastical activity. Let us therefore thank the Lord, Who has thus favoured our Church. Let us also give thanks before the whole people to the Soviet Government for its understanding of the religious needs of the Orthodox population. At the same time let us assure the Government that we will not misuse the confidence it has shown us.

"In undertaking now, with the blessings of the Lord, the work of this Synod, we clearly realize the greatness of our task and that of all the representatives of the Church. We must show not only with words but with deeds, that not only people indifferent to the Orthodox Faith or traitors to the Orthodox Church can be loyal citizens of the Soviet Union and loyal subjects of the Soviet power, but also the most zealous supporters of the Orthodox Church, to whom the Church with all her dogmas and traditions, with all her laws and prescriptions, is as dear as Truth and Life.

"We want to be Orthodox, and at the same time to see the Soviet Union as our civil Fatherland, whose triumphs and successes are also our triumphs and successes, whose failures are our failures. Every attack, boycott, public catastrophe or an ordinary case of assassination, as the recent one in Warsaw, will be regarded as an attack against ourselves…"

Protopriest Lev Lebedev comments on this: "This murder in Warsaw was the murder by B. Koverdaya of the Bolshevik Voikoff (also known as Weiner), who was one of the principal organizers of the murder of the Imperial Family, which fact was well known then, in 1927. So Sergius let the Bolsheviks clearly understand that he and his entourage were at one with them in all their evil deeds up to and including regicide."[116]

Metropolitan Sergius continued: "Even if we remain Orthodox, we shall yet do our duties as citizens of the Soviet Union 'not only for wrath but also for conscience's sake' (Romans 13.5), and we hope that with the help of God and through working together and giving support to one another we shall be able to fulfil this task.

"We can be hindered only by that which hindered the construction of Church life on the bases of loyalty in the first years of Soviet power. This is an inadequate consciousness of the whole seriousness of what has happened in our country. The establishment of Soviet power has seemed to many like some kind of misunderstanding, something coincidental and therefore not long lasting. People have forgotten that there are no coincidences for the Christian and that in what has happened with us, as in all places and at all times, the same right hand of God is acting, that hand which inexorably leads every nation to the end predetermined for it. To such people who do not want to understand 'the signs of the times', it may also seem that it is wrong to break with the former regime and even with the monarchy, without breaking with Orthodoxy… Only ivory-tower dreamers can think that such an enormous society as our Orthodox Church, with the whole of its organisation, can have a peaceful existence in the State while hiding itself from the authorities. Now, when our Patriarchate, fulfilling the will of the reposed Patriarch, has decisively and without turning back stepped on the path of loyalty, the people who think like this have to either break themselves and, leaving their political sympathies at home, offer to the Church only their faith and work with us only in the name of faith, or (if they cannot immediately break themselves) at least not hinder us, and temporarily leave the scene. We are sure that they will again, and very soon, return to work with us, being convinced that only the relationship to the authorities has changed, while faith and Orthodox Christian life remain unshaken… "[117]

An article in *Izvestia* immediately noted the essence of the declaration – a return to renovationism: "The far-sighted part of the clergy set out on this path already in 1922".[118]

So Sergius' position, or "Sergianism", was in essence "neo-renovationism", and therefore subject to the same condemnation as the earlier renovationism of the "Living Church". In 1937 Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan defined Sergius' ecclesiastical organization as "in essence renovationist". And as recently as November, 2008 the True Orthodox Church of Russia has defined sergianism as "a neo-renovationist schism".[119]

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[116] Lebedev, "Dialogue between the ROCA and the MP: How and Why?", Great Lent, 1998.

[117] Regelson, op. cit., pp. 431-32.

[118] *Izvestia*, in Zhukov, op. cit., p. 40.

[119] At its Council in Odessa under the presidency of Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia.

The radical error lying at the root of the declaration was the idea expressed in the last sentence, that in an antichristian state whose aim was the extirpation of all religion, it was possible to preserve loyalty to the State while "faith and Orthodox Christian life remained unshaken". This presupposed that it was possible, in the Soviet Union as in Ancient Rome, to draw a clear line between politics and religion. But in practice, even more than in theory, this line proved impossible to draw. For the Bolsheviks, there was no such dividing line; for them, *everything* was ideological, everything had to be in accordance with their ideology, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state and its ideology did not pry. Unlike most of the Roman emperors, who allowed the Christians to order their own lives in their own way so long as they showed loyalty to the state, the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere: in family life (civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents), in education (compulsory Marxism), in economics (dekulakization, collectivization), in military service (the oath of allegiance to Lenin), in science (Darwinism, Lysenkoism), in art (socialist realism), and in religion (the requisitioning of valuables, registration, commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, reporting of confessions by the priests). Resistance to any one of these demands was counted as "anti-Soviet behaviour", i.e. *political* disloyalty. Therefore it was no use protesting one's political loyalty to the regime if one refused to accept just one of these demands. According to the Soviet interpretation of the word: "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one has become guilty of all of it" (James 2.10), such a person was an *enemy of the people*.

Metropolitan Sergius' identification of his and his Church's joys and sorrows with the joys and sorrows of Soviet communism placed the souls of the millions who followed him in the most serious jeopardy.[120]

Only two months earlier the bishops imprisoned on Solovki had issued a statement affirming the loyalty of the Church to the Soviet State. But, as Danilushkin points out, "the tone of these affirmations was fundamentally different than in the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. Recognizing necessity – mainly the inevitability of civil submission to the authorities – they decisively protested against the unceremonious interference of the authorities into the inner affairs of the Church, the ban on missionary activity and the religious education of children, firmly expressing their position that in this sphere there could be no compromise on the part of the Church. Although the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius recognized the religious persecutions in the USSR, it called, not the state, but the believers, to peace. In this consists the fundamental difference between the two documents…"[121]

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[120] St. John Cassian writes: "You should know that in the world to come also you will be judged in the lot of those with whom in this life you have been affected by sharing in their gains or losses, their joys or their sorrows…"

[121] Danilushkin, op. cit., p. 291.

The publication of the Declaration was greeted with a storm of criticism. Its opponents saw in it a more subtle version of renovationism. Even its supporters and neutral commentators from the West have recognized that it marked a radical change in the relationship of the Church to the State. Thus Professor William Fletcher comments: "This was a profound and important change in the position of the Russian Orthodox Church, one which evoked a storm of protest."[122] According to the Soviet scholar Titov, "after the Patriarchal church changed its relationship to the Soviet State, undertaking a position of loyalty, in the eyes of the believers any substantial difference whatsoever between the Orthodox Church and the renovationists disappeared."[123] According to Archimandrite (later Metropolitan) John (Snychev), quoting from a renovationist source, in some dioceses in the Urals up to 90% of parishes sent back Sergius' declaration as a sign of protest."[124] Again, Donald Rayfield writes: "In 1927… Metropolitan Sergi formally surrendered the Orthodox Church to the Bolshevik party and state."[125]

As was said above, the Declaration created the most serious schism in Orthodox Church history since the schism of the Papacy in 1054.[126] If only a few had followed the traitor, the damage would have been limited to the loss of his soul and the souls of his followers. But in fact the majority followed him; which brought down the just retribution of God in the form of the worst persecution of the Church in history…

The first recorded verbal reaction of the anti-sergianists (or, as they now came to be called, the "True Orthodox Christians") came from the bishops imprisoned on Solovki, and was written on September 14/27, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, on the initiative of Bishop Basil of Priluki, who was later tortured to death for his opposition to sergianism. The epistle began by approving Sergius' "affirmation of the loyalty of the Church in relation to Soviet power in everything that concerns civil legislation and administration". However, it went on, "the subjection of the Church to the State's decrees is expressed [in Sergius' declaration] in such a categorical and sweeping form that it could easily be understood in the sense of a complete entanglement of Church and State… The Church cannot declare all the triumphs and successes of the State to be Her own triumphs and successes. Every government can occasionally make unwarranted, unjust and cruel decisions which become obligatory to the Church by way of coercion, but which the Church cannot rejoice in or approve of. One of the tasks of the present government is the elimination of all religion. The government's successes in this direction cannot be recognized by the Church as Her own successes… The epistle renders to the government 'thanks before the whole people to the Soviet government for its understanding of the religious needs of the Orthodox population'. An expression of gratitude of such a kind on the lips of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church cannot be sincere and therefore does not correspond to the dignity of the Church… The epistle of the patriarchate sweepingly accepts the official version and lays all the blame for the grievous clashes between the Church and the State on the Church…

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[122] Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917-1971*, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 57.

[123] Titov, in Fletcher, op. cit., p. 59.

[124] Regelson, op. cit., p. 434.

[125] Rayfield, Stalin and his Hangmen, London: Viking, 2004, p. 123.

[126] Sergius Chechuga *("Deklaratsia", ili Novij Velikij Raskol* (The "Declaration", or a New Great Schism), St. Petersburg, 2006) compares it to the schism of the Old Ritualists in the seventeenth century. There is indeed a resemblance, but the schismatics in the seventeenth century were those who rejected the Orthodox State, whereas the schismatics after 1927 were those who identified their interests with the interests of the God-fighting State.

"In 1926 Metropolitan Sergius said that he saw himself only as a temporary deputy of the patriarchal locum tenens and in this capacity as not empowered to address pastoral messages to the entire Russian Church. If then he thought himself empowered only to issue circular letters, why has he changed his mind now? The pastoral message of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod leads the Church into a pact with the State. It was considered as such by its authors as well as by the government. Sergius' action resembles the political activities of the 'Living Church' and differs from them not in nature but only in form and scope…"[127]

According to different sources, 17 or 20 or 26 bishops signed this epistle. However, the majority of the bishops both on Solovki and on the mainland did not consider Sergius' declaration a reason for immediately breaking communion with him. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan wrote to an unknown person that the Solovki bishops wanted to wait for the repentance of Sergius "until the convening of a canonical Council… in the assurance that the Council could not fail to demand that of him".[128]

In time, however, the True Orthodox became the majority on Solovki, as was recognized by the famous philologist, D.S. Likhachev, who was for some time a prisoner in the island camps.[129] He attributed this to the extraordinary influence of Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov) of Vyatka, who had been the first hierarch to break communion with Sergius. Other True Orthodox bishops on Solovki were Bishop Maximus of Serpukhov and Bishop Nectarius of Smolensk, while the sergianists were led by Archbishop Hilarion of Verey.

The question raised by Sergius' Declaration and the Letter of the Solovki bishops was: in what sense, and to what extent, could the Church be "loyal" to Soviet power? The consensus of the confessing bishops was that during his first term as patriarchal locum tenens, in 1926, Sergius had not overstepped the mark of permissible loyalty, but that in his second term, in 1927, he had gone too far.

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[127] Regelson, op. cit., p. 440.

[128] Nicholas Balashov, "Esche raz o 'deklaratsii' i o 'solidarnosti' solovchan" (Again on the 'declaration' and on 'the solidarity of the Solovkans'), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), 157, III-1989, pp. 197-198.

[129] Likhachev, "Iz noveishej istorii Russkoj Tserkvi" (From the most recent history of the Russian Church), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 14, 1995.

As Fr. Alexander Mazyrin writes, "The Church immediately felt that a change had taken place. At the beginning of 1928 Bishop Victor (Ostrovidov) wrote: 'The loyalty of individual believers to the civil authorities is one thing. The inner dependence of the Church herself on the civil authorities is something different. In the first situation the Church keeps her spiritual freedom in Christ, while the believers become confessors during persecutions against the faith. In the second situation she (the Church) is only an obedient instrument for the realization of the political ideas of the civil authorities, while the confessors for the faith are now state criminals.' 'The True Orthodox Church must always be apolitical and spiritual, and for that reason can enter into no kind of active external struggle against Soviet power,' wrote Bishop Victor in the autumn of 1927, thereby deducing the civil loyalty of the Church from her very nature.

"The difference between the loyalty in relation to the authorities of Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter, on the one hand, and that of Metropolitan Sergius, on the other, was very intelligibly explained in June, 1930 by the Kievan oppositionist to the patriarchate, G.A. Kostkevich, in a letter to his correspondent abroad, A.P. Velmin, who was inclined to justify the politics of the locum tenens. Kostkevich wrote: 'The Church was and will be loyal in relation to the authorities, it will not struggle with them, it will submit, recognize it, etc. But you did not want to understand and see… the difference between the epistles, letters and other things of the Patriarch and Metropolitan Paeter and the acts of Metropolitan Sergius. In the latter case there was a complete loyalty, recognition, submission that was not formal, but in essence, religious (the authorities are from God). But in the former case there was no servility, not renunciation of the Church's inner freedom and independence, no forgetting of the righteousness of God; there was a division between the things of Caesar and the things of God. The patriarch, as is well known, himself commemorated the authorities.[130] However, he never committed acts that defiled the dignity of the Church or which limited Her freedom. In appointing bishops, he did not ask the sanction of the GPU, he did not submit those displeasing to the government to ecclesiastical repressions. On the contrary, against the will of the government, he insisted on commemorating the exiled bishops and preserved their sees for them. Peter did the same. And how many people did the GPU exile because of this. After all, there is a boundary, - you will not dispute this, - where loyalty ends and servility (that damages the work of the Church) begins. This boundary was crossed by Metropolitan Sergius – this is so clear and obvious that I am amazed that your do not understand it.'

"The personnel politics of the locum tenens, and the laying of bans to please the authorities, were the main manifestations of the collaborationism of Metropolitan Sergius from the point of view of those who disagreed with him. In this the fiercest opponents of the locum tenens saw open support of the OGPU in the work of destroying the Church, and not simply civil loyalty in relation to the authorities. 'Metropolitan Sergius capitulated before the GPU,’ wrote G.A. Kostkevich in 1930. ‘The citadel of Orthodoxy, the patriarchal throne, fell into the hands of the enemies of the Church. The struggle with the Church goes on not only from outside, and is carried out not only by those who wear the uniform of the GPU and have a party card, but also from within by those who have a panagia and cross on their breast, who walk in monastic vestments and Episcopal mantias.’ ‘The whole Church felt that Metropolitan Sergius had committed a crime, that he had handed over the administration of the Church into the power of the atheists, and was acting, and would act from now on, at the command of the GPU,’ wrote the priest Michael Polsky, who had fled from Russia. In reasonings of this kind perhaps the person who went further than anybody else was Archbishop Seraphim (Lukyanov) [of Paris], who declared in 1930: ‘”Your joys are our joys” – Metropolitan Sergius has said this openly. One of the first joys of Soviet power is the destruction of faith in God. The metropolitan, by sharing in the joy of destroying faith in God, is a God-fighter. He has not only fallen away from the Church, but is fighting against her. A simple truth that is terrifying in its clarity and simplicity.’”[131]

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[130] However, as we have seen, the people got round the order to commemorate the authorities in ingenious ways. (V.M.)

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[131] Mazyrin, “Prichiny nepriatia politiki mitropolita Sergia (Stragorodskogo) v tserkovnykh krugakh”(The causes of the rejection of the politics of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) in church circles), http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=libe&id=2935, April 14, 2011.

12. THE SACRED STRUGGLE IN GREECE

Led by the Athonite confessors, the Old Calendarists continued to defy the innovators on the mainland and islands of Greece. At this time it remained a largely lay movement, with no bishops and only a few priests. But this did not lessen the zeal of the confessing Christians, and in response to their zeal the Lord continued to add more and more people to them.
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On October 25, 1925, four nuns from the monastery of St. Pelagia on the island of Tinos were sent for trial before an ecclesiastical court for breaking communion with the new calendarists. The court decreed that they should be exiled, but they ignored this order and continued to carry out missionary work among the pilgrims who came to venerate the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God on Tinos.

On April 14, 1926, three of them were sent for trial in Athens. During the trial, Bishop Sinesius of Thebes said to one of the nuns, Abbess Eupraxia, who was also his cousin: "If you do not repent and accept the decision of the Holy Synod concerning the calendar, I personally will take off your cassock." "I grieve," replied the abbess, "that kindred blood flows in our veins, and that you have broken your hierarchical oath. I will say just one thing to you: 'I prefer to go to Paradise in coloured clothes but Orthodox, than to be in hell in my cassock but together with schismatics!' Seven hierarchs under the presidency of Chrysostom Papadopoulos sentenced the nuns to be deprived of their monastic schema and excommunicated. Then the ten leading zealots in the monastery were expelled. But the rest continued the struggle.[132]

In 1926, in the village of Nikiti in Khalkidiki, the True Orthodox priest, Archimandrite Hilarion Ouzounopoulos, was arrested and given three months in prison in spite of the resistance of his parishioners. Fr. Hilarion was called a "counter-revolutionary". From this it is evident that the True Orthodox in Greece shared not only their name and their faith but even the form of their accusation with the True Orthodox of Russia.[133]

At Christmas in the year 1926, Chrysostom Papadopoulos ordered the closing of the True Orthodox church of St. Parasceva, Aiantios on the island of Salamis. So the priest, Fr. Christopher Psillides, decided to celebrate the Divine Liturgy outside, opposite the doors of the church, in spite of the December cold. The ecclesiastical authorities on the island sent some sailors to the church to seize the priest, but after arriving and surrounding the worshippers they decided to disobey orders and go back.[134]

In Thessalonica on the Sunday of the Samaritan woman, 1927, Fr. Stergius Liouras, the married priest of the True Orthodox Church of the Three Hierarchs, was arrested after the Liturgy on the orders of the new calendarist metropolitan. In 1935 he was again seized on the order of the same metropolitan and beaten by the police. He died a few days later.[135]

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[132] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 64-80.
[133] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 93-100.
[134] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 112-115.

On November 21, 1927, the local authorities moved to arrest the priest of the True Church in Mandra, Attica. However, the parishioners formed a wall to defend their pastor, and in the ensuing scuffle a young married woman, Catherine Routti, was fatally wounded. She died on November 28, the first martyr of the Old Calendarist movement in Greece.[136]

On the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 1928, on the orders of Chrysostom Papadopoulos, police came to seize the priest of the True Orthodox church of St. Marina, Liopesi, Attica. The priest escaped, but several parishioners were taken to Koropi prison.[137]

On April 22, 1928, Hieromonk Arsenius Sakellarios was taken to Lamia police station. Then the local new calendarist metropolitan put him on public trial, at which he was officially defrocked and the hair of his beard and head cut off. Then he was released.[138]

On April 7, 1929, the Annunciation Liturgy at the True Orthodox church of the Annunciation, Kertezi, Kalavryta, was forbidden by the police because the priest did not have the permission of the local new calendarist metropolitan. The church was besieged, and the chief of police on horseback threatened to shoot the whole congregation. But the people refused to hand over their priest, saying, “We’ll all die with him”. The policeman took out his revolver, but the people stood firm. Eventually he had to give in.[139]

In 1929, on the feast of St. George according to the new calendar, Fr. Nicholas, the new calendarist priest of the church of the Forerunner, Mesoropi, Pangaion was struck by the incongruity of celebrating the feast of St. George during the period of the Great Fast (something that never happens according to the Orthodox Calendar). He went to his local bishop and asked him for permission to celebrate the feast of St. George according to the Orthodox Calendar. The bishop gave permission. However, when Fr. Nicholas continued to celebrate according to the old calendar, a persecution was stirred up against him. As he felt the approach of death, he told his parishioners: “When I die and they stop you from burying me in the cemetery, bury me in my garden. But if they come and take my body away by force, I adjure you not to follow my funeral procession!” The new calendarists set the date of Fr. Nicholas’ trial for November, but he died on October 19. The new calendarists came to bury him, but his widow refused to hand over his body. Then the new calendarist bishop came to the town, and sent a priest to the widow. He, too, was rebuffed. Finally, the True Orthodox laypeople began to bury their pastor in his garden, as he had ordered. But then the bishop came with police and forbade the burial, ordering the police to seize the body. The parishioners at first resisted, but then, not wanting bloodshed, they kissed the body, threw some earth on it and then allowed it to be taken away.[140]

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[135] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 116-119.

[136] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 120-137. She was canonized by the True Orthodox Church of Greece under Archbishop Kallinikos in 2014.

[137] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 143-149.

[138] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 150-157.

[139] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 166-172.

Meanwhile, the Eastern Patriarchs were entering into communion with Metropolitan Sergius in Russia. After his church organization was legalised by the authorities in 1927, first Damian of Jerusalem, then Gregory of Antioch and then, in December, Basil III of Constantinople wrote to Sergius recognizing him – although Basil did not immediately break relations with the renovationists, who were not in communion with Sergius.[141] Thus did the traitors of Orthodoxy in the Greek- and Russian-speaking Churches join hands over the tortured minds and bodies of the True Orthodox Christians in both countries.

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[140] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 173-186.

[141] Tsypin, op. cit., p. 109. Basil was a Freemason. See www.grandlodge.gr/Famous_gr_home.html. It should be remembered that in 1927 the Greek government classed Freemasonry as a philanthropic organization. See Ioannis Michaletos, "Freemasonry in Greece: Secret History Exposed", http://www.balkanalysis.com/2006/09/28/freemasonry-in-greece-secret-history-revealed/.

13. THE SACRED STRUGGLE IN ROMANIA

In 1920, Carol, the heir to the Romanian throne, having been obliged to leave his first wife, Zisi Lambrino, was married to Princess Helen of Greece, who bore to him the present king, Mihail.[142] In 1922, however, he took as his mistress the Jewess Magda Lupescu. This was a public scandal, and in 1925 he was obliged both to resign his right of succession in favour of his son and leave the country. From the death of King Ferdinand in 1927 until 1930, as the king was a small boy, the country was ruled by a regency council which included Patriarch Miron and Carol's younger brother Nicolae. Carol was recalled in 1930, and his former wife was forced into exile, while the king lived openly with Lupescu (he only married her after his exile from Romania in 1940). During this period, Patriarch Miron used his power as temporary prime minister to persecute the True Orthodox Christians of Romania.

"The first and foremost problem" for the True Orthodox, writes Constantin Bujor, "was the lack of Priests. Religious persecution against the clergy and Faithful was in full swing, especially in Moldavia. Great sacrifice and an unwavering will were needed in order to uphold the True Faith. The organization of the Old Calendar Church started with the construction of the Church in Vānători, Neamţ County, and afterwards in other places; and alongside this, religious assistance was provided for the Faithful in various localities in the houses of trustworthy Christians. In addition to Vānători and Rādăşeni, Brusturi, Răşca, Slătioara, Cucova, and Angheleşti were among the first places to oppose the calendar innovation, and strong communities of true believers formed in these localities. It was in Rādăşeni that Hieromonk Glicherie first established himself. At the outset, the Divine services were held in the village Church, but this situation was not allowed to continue. In normal circumstances, the Church could have been used by both the Old and the New Calendarist communities, because all of the Faithful had contributed to its construction. However, Father Haralambie Teodorus, the Priest who served the New Calendarist community, locked the Old Calendarists out of the Church and removed the clapper from the bell so as to prevent them from holding services. He incited the locals to pelt the Old Calendarist Faithful with rocks, and on one particular day he told them, 'If you need a Church, go build your own.'

"This hatred was fomented by New Calendarist clergymen and subsequently degenerated into acts of violence and aggression. The celebration of Holy Pascha according to the Gregorian Paschalion in 1926 and 1929[143] convinced the Faithful that the New Calendar was, in fact, just the first step in a process that had as its goal the destruction of the Orthodox ethos. In 1931, Hieromonk Glicherie came to Rādăşeni and began to organize an Old Calendar parish in response to a decision made by the local Faithful. On May 8/21, 1932, he blessed the place where the new Church of Saints Peter and Paul was to be built and laid the foundation stone. The Church was built out of wood in twenty-eight days, covered with sheet metal, and then stuccoed in a single day. But in June of that same year, the local New Calendarist Priest sent two men under the cover of darkness to set the Church on fire. However, the Church was saved by the father of Father Nicolae Onofrei, Vasile Onofrei, who was alerted and awakened. Along with Nicolae (then a child) and his two sisters, by barking dogs. One of the malefactors, Teodor Sandu, fell very ill later on and was carried on a stretcher to Church to ask for forgiveness. On October 14/27, 1933, the Church was Consecrated.

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[142] Since King George of Greece, Helen's brother, wished to marry Carol's sister Elizabeth, and this is forbidden by the canons, it was arranged that the two marriages took place exactly simultaneously in Bucharest and Athens, so that the one should not be an impediment to the other!

[143] According to Stavros Markou ("The Legacy of ROCOR and Her Successors"), Patriarch Miron celebrated Pascha according to the papist paschalion "for the first three years (1924 to 1927)".

"In later 1930, Hieromonk Glicherie and Hierodeacon David went to Jerusalem to discuss with Patriarch Damianos of Jerusalem (1848-1931) the situation of the Romanian Orthodox Christians who wished to continue observing the Julian Calendar. The Patriarch blessed them to continue their struggle and to build and Consecrate new Churches, for which purpose he provided them with Holy Chrism. To this day, in the home of Father Nicholae Onofrei there is a photograph of Father Glicherie serving with Patriarch Damianos. On returning to Romania, Father Glicherie continued the struggle with greater zeal and invigorated the Old Calendar Church by building over thirty new Churches. He went to many places in the country, including Basarabia, accompanied by a group of monks from both Romania and Mount Athos, who helped him in convincing the Faithful to keep alive love, hope, and confidence in the power of the traditional Faith.

"For the service of blessing the site for a new Church or of Consecrating finished Churches, the Faithful, dressed in festal attire, would come on pilgrimage from all over the country in convoys of carriages. Led by Father Glicherie and his Synodeia, journeys to these sites were permeated with spiritual joy. Father Nicolae Onofrei remembers that when he was a child, he and his brother Onofrei Onofrei (later to become Metropolitan Silvestru [1924-1992]) were taken by their father (who later became a monk at the Slătioara Monastery with the name 'Varlaam') on such pilgrimages when Churches or sites for Churches were to be blessed. While travelling towards Oglinzi, Neamţ County, to bless the site for a new Church at Vadu in Moldavia, they met convoys of carriages from Mălini, Drăguşeni, and other places. Father Glicherie stood up and greeted the Faithful with 'Christ is Risen!', to which the crowd responded with 'Truly He is Risen!' so loudly that the entire Moldavian valley they were crossing echoed with the shouting. Because it was the Paschal season, the Faithful sang 'Christ is Risen' the entire way to the new Church. They were all overcome with spiritual joy and wanted to glorify God.

"This unity displayed by the Old Calendarist Faithful, which lent a note of greater splendour to their religious celebrations, was not viewed favourably by the authorities or the representatives of the official Church. Thus, on June 29/July 12, 1932, the Old Calendar Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, strong action was taken to stifle the celebration and especially to discourage the organization of such events. At the end of the service, the mayor of Rādăşeni, Costică Grigorescu, deceitfully and cunningly said, 'All the men of your parish have to go to the Prefecture in Fălticeni in order to receive approval for the functioning of your Church.' Since the people respected the mayor as being a sober individual, they joyfully left on foot for Fălticeni, a distance of two or three kilometres over a hill. Although Father Glicherie did not trust the mayor, he approved the departure of the people for Fălticeni, placing all his hope in God.

"After the Faithful had departed and had gone some distance, the Church was surrounded by forty gendarmes, all of them drunk, who had entered the courtyard in search of Father Glicherie. When he saw the danger, Father Glicherie ran into the backyard and hid among the potato plants. However, he was spotted by the gendarmes, who brutally pounced on him. They tried to haul him over the fence, but they were seen by a few nuns, who alerted Vasile Onofrei by their cries. Together with Toader Amariei and Anica Grecu, he sprang to Father Glicherie's assistance and yelled at the gendarmes, 'What are you doing in my backyard!' One of the gendarmes answered with a warning shot; but as the gendarme tried to reload his gun, he lost his balance dodging Anica Grecu, who had lunged at him with a pitchfork. He was disarmed by Vasile Onofrei, who in turn freed Father Glicherie. During this vicious attack, the gendarmes brutally kicked Hieromonk Glicerie's legs with their boots, leaving him with an incurable wound for the rest of his life. Vasile Onofrei hid the gun used by the gendarme and kept it for two weeks, intending to take it with him to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to denounce the abuses committed by the Gendarmerie.

"The Faithful who lived close to the Church made haste to alert the people by tolling the bells, and one of them went on horseback to catch up with the believers who had left for Fălticeni. Meanwhile, the Church was defended by women, who blocked the gate and prevented the gendarmes from entering the courtyard. The gendarmes withdrew only upon the return of those who had gone to the Prefecture and were now angry at having been deceived by the mayor. Later on, it turned out that the gendarmes had been hiding in the house of the New Calendarist Priest, Father Haralambie Teodoru, waiting for the Faithful to depart for Fălticeni. The same Father Teodoru had gotten the gendarmes drunk, thereby becoming an accomplice to their criminal action."[144]

There were other Old Calendarists in Romania besides Fr. Glycherie's Church. Thus in Bessarabia there was Fr. Gamail Papil. After the war, his spiritual children joined Bishop Vasily-Victor (Leu), who had been consecrated by Metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade) of ROCOR.[145]

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[144] Bujor, *Resisting unto Blood: Sixty-Five Years of Persecution of the True (Old Calendar) Orthodox Church of Romania (October 1924 – December 1989),* Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2003, pp. 55-60.

[145] Also, writes Glazkov, "the priests Fathers Boris Binetsky, Demetrius Stitskevich and Vladimir Polyakov were put on trial for serving according to the old style." (op. cit., p. 57)

14. THE BIRTH OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Although the church revolution engineered by Metropolitan Sergius and supported by the Soviets was conceived and first brought to fruition in the centre, in Moscow, it could not hope to succeed on a large scale if it did not also triumph in the other capital of Russian life, Petrograd – or Leningrad, as the communists now called it. The revolutionaries had good hopes of succeeding in Petrograd. After all, it had been the birthplace of the political revolution in 1917, and had also been pivotal in the renovationists' church revolution in 1922-23. But by the Providence of God it was precisely in revolutionary Petrograd that the fight-back began. Let us go back a little in time to see how this came to pass.[146]

By the end of 1925 the council of vicar-bishops that had ruled the Petrograd diocese since the martyrdom of Metropolitan Benjamin ceased its existence when Bishops Benedict (Plotnikov), Innocent (Tikhonov) and Seraphim (Protopopov) were arrested, leaving only Gregory (Lebedev). Also in the city were Bishops Sergius (Druzhinin) and Demetrius (Lyubimov). These three were all thoroughly Orthodox, and would lead the Catacomb Church after 1927 and suffer martyric deaths.

However, in the spring of 1926 there returned from exile two Petrograd vicar-bishops, Nicholas (Yarushevich) and Alexis (Simansky). Alexis "hurried to Moscow to Metropolitan Sergius, and found with him, who was also a former renovationist, complete mutual understanding. From Moscow Alexis returned [to Petrograd] with a resolution on the freeing of Bishop Gregory (Lebedev) of Schlisselburg from administration of the Leningrad diocese and on the appointment of Alexis himself as temporary administrator. He began to serve in the cathedral church of the Resurrection-on-the-Blood. However, the people distrusted him, while the majority of clergy began to oppose him, according to the witness of Protopriest Michael Cheltsov, who was the first who definitely and categorically expressed himself against Alexis, 'not having the strength or right to recognize him for his very great sin against the Church and Metropolitan Benjamin and for his huge service to renovationism'."[147]

Bishops Alexis and Nicholas, together with a group of clergy led by Protopriest Nicholas Chukov, who became Metropolitan Gregory of Leningrad after the war, now represented the neo-renovationist tendency in the city; they wanted to improve relations with the Soviets and get the Church legalized by them.

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[146] In this section I am particularly indebted to the work of Lydia Sikorskaya, *Svyaschennomucheniki Sergij, episkop Narvskij, Vasilij, episkop Kargopolskij, Ilarion, episkop Porechskij. Tainoye sluzhenie Iosiflyan* (Holy Hieromartyrs Sergius, Bishop of Narva, Basil, Bishop of Kargopol, Hilarion, Bishop of Porech), Moscow: Bratonezh, 2009, pages 78 et seq.

[147] Bishop Ambrose (Epiphanov), "Pervij preemnik Sergia. K 40-letiu so dnia konchiny Patriarkha Aleksia I (Simanskogo). Chast' pervaia" (First successor of Sergius. On the 40th anniversary of the death of Patriarch Alexis I (Simansky), Part One), htto://www.portalcredo.ru/site/print.php?act=fresh&id=1206, p. 4.

Fr. Michael Cheltsov describes the incipient schism between these two groups of bishops: "Alexis, led by the group of Fr. Chukov and co., decided to push through the matter of negotiations with Soviet power over legalization through the common participation of all the bishops and even through a decision by the bishops alone. Gregory gave no reply to his invitation and did not go. Demetrius at first suggested going, and Gregory advised him to go. Sergius of Narva, flattered by this for him unexpected beckoning into the midst of the bishops, was staying with me and Bishop Demetrius and on our joint advice was at the meeting. The three bishops did not constitute an assembly. Alexis and Nicholas, who were both sympathetic to legalization and wanted it fervently, could not consider Sergius as their equal, and therefore without the other two considered that the meeting had not taken place. Sergius also spoke about the necessity of a meeting of all the bishops, but introduced the desire to bring to this meeting some of the city protopriests. The meeting ended with nothing. But for the two bishops – Alexis and Demetrius – it was clear that Gregory and Demetrius were not with them, but against them."

"Two groups became clearly delineated: Alexis and Nicholas, and Gregory and Demetrius. Sergius, in view of his closeness to [Protopriest Basil] Veriuzhsky [rector of the zealot Cathedral of the Resurrection "on the Blood"] and to me, also joined the group of Gregory…"[148]

In August, 1926 Bishop Alexis was transferred to the see of Novgorod, and Archbishop Joseph (Petrovykh) of Petrograd was appointed Metropolitan of Petrograd. This appointment was greeted with great joy by the faithful. However, the Soviets refused Joseph permission to stay in Petrograd - he served there only once, on September 12, the feast of St. Alexander Nevsky, - and exiled him to Ustiuzhna. He never returned to the city again… However, Metropolitan Joseph never relinquished his see and appointed the little-known Bishop Gabriel (Voyevodin) as his deputy.

Meanwhile, Bishop Alexis received permission from the Soviets to stay in Petrograd and began to serve in the churches of his friends in the city. This was opposed by Bishops Gregory and Demetrius, who obtained from Metropolitan Joseph that bishops from other sees (i.e. Alexis) should not be allowed to serve in the city without the permission of Bishop Gabriel. But "Alexis, raised by Metropolitan Sergius to the rank of archbishop, paid no attention to this decree and continued to serve in the churches of the city, without abandoning his intrigues against the persecuted hierarch [Metropolitan Joseph]. The clergy were upset, and there were rumours that Vladyka Joseph would not be coming back and that bishop Alexis would soon be appointed the ruling bishop in the rank of metropolitan."[149]

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[148] Cheltsov, "V chem prichina tserkovnoj razrukhi v 1920-1930 gg." (The Reason for the Church Collapse in 1920-1930), *Minuvshee* (The Past), Moscow and St. Petersburg, 1994, issue 17, p. 447.
[149] Bishop Ambrose, op. cit., p. 4.

Early in 1927 Bishops Gregory and Gabriel were arrested and imprisoned. Since Metropolitan Joseph was still in exile in Ustiuzhna, Bishop Nicholas began to administer the diocese as being the senior bishop by ordination, and in April received official permission to do this from Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow. On his return to Petrograd, Bishop Nicholas began to act authoritatively and brusquely towards his fellow hierarchs, and in August he obtained the forcible retirement of Bishop Sergius from his see.

The previous month Metropolitan Sergius' Declaration had been published, and Bishop Nicholas tried to get it distributed and read out in church. However, there was widespread resistance to this. When Fr. Nicholas Chukov read it out, there was a great commotion in the church. And when one of the deans, the future Hieromartyr Fr. Sergius Tikhomirov, received it, he immediately sent it back to Nicholas and resigned his deanery. "Whether the epistle was read out somewhere or not," writes Fr. Michael Cheltsov, "the mood among the Peterites against Metropolitan Sergius and to a significant extent against our Nicholas was sharply negative. Their Orthodoxy, especially of the former, was subjected to powerful doubt, and trust in them was undermined. Our clergy, if they read the epistle, were all against it."[150]

However, it was not the Declaration so much as the actions of Metropolitan Sergius against Metropolitan Joseph that stirred the Petrograd flock into action. On September 17, 1927, Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod, probably acting under pressure from the authorities, transferred Metropolitan Joseph from Petrograd to Odessa. On September 28, Metropolitan Joseph wrote to Sergius that he refused to accept it, saying that he saw in it "an evil intrigue by a clique which did not want him to be in Leningrad". Then he wrote to Tuchkov asking that he be allowed to administer the Leningrad diocese. Finally he wrote to Sergius again rebuking him and his Synod for "a woefully servile obedience to a principle alien to the Church". He said that he regarded his transfer to the Odessa see as "anti-canonical, ill-advised and pleasing to an evil intrigue in which I will have no part". Or, as he put it in 1930: "Summoned for this reason to Moscow, and learning that the transfer was elicited by intrigues on the part of individual members of the clergy, I declared that I found the ban for these reasons to be unlawful."[151]

On October 21, Sergius directed all the clergy in Russia to commemorate the Soviet authorities, and not the bishops who were in exile. This measure greatly increased the anxiety of the faithful. The commemoration of the Soviet authorities was seen by many as the boundary beyond which the Church would fall away from Orthodoxy. And the refusal to commemorate the exiled hierarchs implied that the hierarchs themselves were not Orthodox and constituted a break with the tradition of commemorating exiled hierarchs that extended back to the time of the Roman catacombs. Sergius was in effect cutting the faithful off from their canonical hierarchs.

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[150] Cheltsov, op. cit., p. 457.

[151] M.S. Sakharov, L.E. Sikorskaia, *Sviaschennomuchenik Iosif, Mitropolit Petrogradskij. Zhizneopisanie i Trudy* (Hieromartyr Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd. Life and Works), St. Petersburg, 2006, p. 114.

One of the leaders of the opposition, the future martyr and possibly secret bishop, Mark Novoselov, saw in these events the third step in the revolution's destruction of the Church. The first step was the revolution's depriving the Church of Her civil protector, the Orthodox Christian Emperor in 1917, "thereby doubling the significance of the pastors". The second step was its depriving the Church of the possibility of convening Councils, by which it "increased their [the pastors'] significance tenfold, since it made every bishop the real guardian of Orthodoxy in his province. The third step took place in 1927, when "under the form of the gift of legalization the Church was deprived of this Her head," which increased the significance of the true pastors still more.

Sergius' act of October 21 "depersonalized" the Liturgy, according to Mark, by "1) casting into the shade the person of Metropolitan Peter through (a) ceasing to commemorate him as 'our Lord' and (b) placing the name of Metropolitan Sergius next to it, that is, two names in one patriarchal place, which is both contrary to the spirit of the canons and deprives the name of the head of the Russian Church – and the personal name of Metropolitan Peter - of its very symbolical meaning; 2) introducing the commemoration of the impersonal name of the authorities, … and 3) casting into oblivion the names and persons who shone out in their confessing exploit."[152] Bishop Mark pointed out that, while transfers of bishops took place frequently in tsarist Russia, those were in the context of a single Church family, when Russia was as it were "one diocese". But the transfers in Soviet times were far more dangerous; for when the people were deprived of the bishop whom they knew and loved, there was no guarantee that his replacement – if there was a replacement – would be Orthodox.

On October 25, Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich) proclaimed in the cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Petrograd the decision of the Provisional Synod to transfer Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) from Petrograd to Odessa (the secular authorities had already forbidden Metropolitan Joseph to return to the city). In the same decision Bishops Demetrius and Seraphim were forbidden to leave the diocese "without the knowledge and blessing" of Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich). This caused major disturbances in Petrograd. However, Metropolitan Sergius paid no attention to the disturbances in Petrograd. Taking upon himself the administration of the diocese, he sent in his place Bishop Alexis (Simansky). So already, only three months after the declaration, the new revolutionary cadres were being put in place… Then, on October 31, Archimandrite Sergius (Zenkevich) was consecrated Bishop of Detskoe Selo, although the canonical bishop, Gregory (Lebedev), was still alive but languishing in a GPU prison. From that moment many parishioners stopped going to churches where Metropolitan Sergius' name was commemorated, and Bishop Nicholas was not invited to serve.[153]

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[152] Novoselov, "Oblichenie netserkovnosti sergianskikh printsipov 'poslushania' i 'edinstva Tserkvi'" (A Rebuke to the non-ecclesiastical nature of the sergianist principles of 'obedience' and 'the unity of the Church'), www.romanitas.ru.

[153] V.V.Antonov, "Otvet na Deklaratsiu" (Reply to the Declaration), *Russkij Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), № 24, 1996, p. 73.

On October 30 Metropolitan Joseph wrote to Sergius: "You made me metropolitan of Leningrad without the slightest striving for it on my part. It was not without disturbance and distress that I accepted this dangerous obedience, which others, perhaps wisely (otherwise it would have been criminal) decisively declined… Vladyko! Your firmness is yet able to correct everything and urgently put an end to every disturbance and indeterminateness. It is true, I am not free and cannot now serve my flock, but after all everybody understands this 'secret'… Now anyone who is to any degree firm and needed is unfree (and will hardly be free in the future)… You say: this is what the authorities want; they are giving back their freedom to exiled hierarchs on the condition that they change their former place of serving and residence. But what sense or benefit can we derive from the leap-frogging and shuffling of hierarchs that this has elicited, when according to the spirit of the Church canons they are in an indissoluble union with their flock as with a bride? Would it not be better to say: let it be, this false human mercy, which is simply a mockery of our human dignity, which strives for a cheap effect, a spectre of clemency. Let it be as it was before; it will be better like that. Somehow we'll get to the time when they finally understand that the eternal, universal Truth cannot be conquered by exiles and vain torments… One compromise might be permissible in the given case… Let them (the hierarchs) settle in other places as temporarily governing them, but let them unfailingly retain their former title… I cannot be reconciled in my conscience with any other scheme, I am absolutely unable to recognize as correct my disgustingly tsarist-rasputinite transfer to the Odessa diocese, which took place without any fault on my part or any agreement of mine, and even without my knowledge. And I demand that my case be immediately transferred from the competence of your Synod, in whose competence I am not the only one to doubt, for discussion by a larger Council of bishops, to which alone I consider myself bound to display unquestioning obedience."

However, Metropolitan Sergius paid no attention to the disturbances in Petrograd. Taking upon himself the administration of the diocese, he sent in his place Bishop Alexis (Simansky). So already, only three months after the declaration, the new revolutionary cadres were being put in place… Then, on October 31, Archimandrite Sergius (Zenkevich) was consecrated Bishop of Detskoe Selo, although the canonical bishop, Gregory (Lebedev), was still alive but languishing in a GPU prison. From that moment many parishioners stopped going to churches where Metropolitan Sergius' name was commemorated, and Bishop Nicholas was not invited to serve.

On December 12, they sent a delegation led by Bishop Demetrius and representing eight Petrograd bishops, clergy and academics to Moscow to meet Sergius. Here the conversation centred, not on Sergius' canonical transgressions, but on the central issue of his relationship to Soviet power. At one point Sergius said: "By my new church policy I am saving the Church." To which Archpriest Victorinus Dobronravov replied: "The Church does not have need of salvation; the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. You, yourself, Vladyka, have need of salvation through the Church."[154]

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[154] Andreyev, op. cit., p. 100.

This dialogue encapsulated the heretical essence of Sergianism, namely, the idea that the Church founded by Christ and which He promised would prevail against the gates of Hades needed to be "saved" by the weak hand of man entering into agreements precisely with the gates of Hades. The Church is built on the rock of the true confession of the faith. If that rock is replaced by some more porous material that is in need of strengthening by man, then it ceases to be the Church and will collapse.

On December 15 Tuchkov, having received a secret report from Leningrad on this meeting with Sergius, wrote the following in his own handwriting: "To Comrade Polyansky. 1. Tell Leningrad that Sergius had a delegation with such-and-such suggestions. 2. Suggest that the most active laymen be arrested under some other pretences. 3. Tell them that we will influence Sergius that he ban certain of the oppositional bishops from serving, and let Yarushevich then ban some of the priests."[155]

After further delegations and dialogues in this vein, Bishops Demetrius of Gdov and Sergius of Narva separated from Sergius on December 26: "for the sake of the peace of our conscience we reject the person and the works of our former leader [predstoiatelia – Sergius was meant], who has unlawfully and beyond measure exceeded his rights". This was approved by Metropolitan Joseph (who had been prevented from coming to Petrograd) on January 7.

In a letter to a Soviet archimandrite, Metropolitan Joseph rejected the charge of being a schismatic and accused Sergius of being a schismatic. He went on: "The defenders of Sergius say that the canons allow one to separate oneself from a bishop only for heresy which has been condemned by a Council. Against this one may reply that the deeds of Metropolitan Sergius may be sufficiently placed in this category as well, if one has in mind such an open violation by him of the freedom and dignity of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. But beyond this, the canons themselves could not foresee many things, and can one dispute that it is even worse and more harmful than any heresy when one plunges a knife into the Church's very heart – Her freedom and dignity?… 'Lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His Own Blood' (8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council)… Perhaps I do not dispute that 'there are more of you at present than of us'. And let it be said that 'the great mass is not for me', as you say. But I will never consider myself a schismatic, even if I were to remain absolutely alone, as one of the holy confessors once was. The matter is not at all one of quantity, do not forget that for a minute: 'The Son of God when He cometh shall He find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18.8). And perhaps the last 'rebels' against the betrayers of the Church and the accomplices of Her ruin will be not only bishops and not protopriests, but the simplest mortals, just as at the Cross of Christ His last gasp of suffering was heard by a few simple souls who were close to Him…"[156]

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[155] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 175.

[156] Andreyev, op. cit., p. 100.

Sergius now began issuing bans against the True Orthodox bishops – which were ignored by the True Orthodox. On December 30 Archbishop Demetrius wrote to the Muscovite priest Fr. Alexander Sidorov, who had been threatened with defrocking: "May the Lord help you to remain in peace and unanimity in the firm confession of the purity and truth of the Orthodox faith, helping each other with love in everything. Do not be disturbed by any bans that the apostates from the faith of Christ are preparing for you. Any ban or defrocking of you by Metropolitan Sergius, his synod or bishops for your stand in the Truth has not reality for you. As long as there remains just one firmly Orthodox bishop, have communion with him. If the Lord permits it, and you remain without a bishop, then may the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, be with you all, inspiring you to solve all the questions which you may encounter on your path in the spirit of True Orthodoxy." Again, on January 4/17, 1928 he wrote "to Father Superiors": "Metropolitan Sergius… has sinned not only against the canonical order of the Church, but also dogmatically against her person, blaspheming the holiness of the exploit of her confessors by suspecting that their Christian convictions were impure and supposedly mixed with politics, against her Catholicity – by their and the synod's violent actions, against her Apostolicity – by subjecting the Church to secular orders and by the inner break with Metropolitan Peter (while preserving a false unity), who did not give Metropolitan Sergius the right to carry out his recent actions…"[157]

Meanwhile, antisergianist groups were forming in different parts of the country. Thus between October 3 and 6 an antisergianist diocesan assembly took place in Ufa, and on November 8 Archbishop Andrew of Ufa issued an encyclical from Kzyl-Orda in which he said that "even if the lying Sergius repents, as he repented three times before of renovationism, under no circumstances must he be received into communion". This encyclical quickly circulated throughout Eastern Russia and Siberia. Again, in November, Bishop Victor of Glazov broke with Sergius. He had especially noted the phrase in the declaration that "only ivory-tower dreamers can think that such an enormous society as our Orthodox Church, with the whole of its organisation, can have a peaceful existence in the State while hiding itself from the authorities." To Sergius himself Bishop Victor wrote: "The enemy has lured and seduced you a second time with the idea of an organization of the Church. But if this organization is bought for the price of the Church of Christ Herself no longer remaining the house of Grace-giving salvation for men, and he who received the organization ceases to be what he was – for it is written, 'Let his habitation be made desolate, and his bishopric let another take' (Acts 1.20) – then it were better for us never to have any kind of organization. What is the benefit if we, having become by God's Grace temples of the Holy Spirit, become ourselves suddenly worthless, while at the same time receiving an organization for ourselves? No. Let the whole visible material world perish; let there be more important in our eyes the certain perdition of the soul to which he who presents such pretexts for sin will be subjected." And he concluded that Sergius' pact with the atheists was "not less than any heresy or schism, but is rather incomparably greater, for it plunges a man immediately into the abyss of destruction, according to the unlying word: 'Whosoever shall deny Me before men…' (Matthew 10.33)."[158]

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[157] http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=777.

Bishop Victor wrote: "It is necessary that Moscow should begin to act, and not merely passively endure the mockeries on the Orthodox Church. Then other dioceses will be encouraged." However, in Moscow only a few parishes refused to recognize Metropolitan Sergius, and the true centre of the Catacomb Church remained Petrograd. Thus it was to Archbishop Demetrius in Petrograd that prominent Muscovites like Fr. Valentine Sventitsky referred. The clergy of Serpukhov under Bishop Maximus also saw Demetrius as their leader.[159]

At the same time antisergianism began to develop in the Ukraine with the publication of the "Kievan appeal" by Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), Bishop Damascene of Glukhov and Fr. Anatolius Zhurakovsky. They wrote concerning Sergius' declaration: "Insofar as the deputy of the patriarchal locum tenens makes declarations in the person of the whole Church and undertakes responsible decisions without the agreement of the locum tenens and an array of bishops, he is clearly going beyond the bounds of his prerogatives…"[160] In December the Kievans were joined by two brother bishops – Archbishops Averky and Pachomius (Kedrov).[161]

The True Orthodox bishops in the Ukraine separated into two groups: the Josephites, who completely rejected all communion with the sergianists, and a group led by Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), which rejected Sergius' declaration, but remained in communion with both the Josephites and the Sergianists insofar as they all commemorated Metropolitan Peter at the liturgy.[162]

Also in the Ukraine was the famous writer Sergius Alexandrovich Nilus, who wrote: "As long as there is a church of God that is not of 'the Church of the evildoers', go to it whenever you can; but if not, pray at home… They will say: 'But where will you receive communion? With whom? I reply: 'The Lord will show you, or an Angel will give you communion, for in 'the Church of the evildoers' there is not and cannot be the Body and Blood of the Lord. Here in Chernigov, out of all the churches only the church of the Trinity has remained faithful to Orthodoxy; but if it, too, commemorates the [sergianist] Exarch Michael, and consequently have communion in prayer with him, acting with the blessing of Sergius and his Synod, then we shall break communion with it."

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[158] Bishop Victor, in Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982, pp. 141-43.

[159] Lidia Sikorskaya, *Viatskij Ispovednik: Sviatitel' Viktor (Ostrovidov)* (The Vyatka Confessor: Holy Hierarch Victor (Ostrovidov), Moscow: Bratonezh, 2010, p. 191.

[160] Regelson, op. cit., p. 435.

[161] Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': 'Kochuiuschij' Sobor 1928 g." (The Catacomb Church: The 'Nomadic' Council of 1928), Russkoe Pravoslavie (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997, p. 3.

[162] Shumilo, op. cit., p. 48.

On February 6, 1928 the hierarchs of the Yaroslavl diocese, led by Metropolitan Agathangel, signed an act of separation from Metropolitan Sergius. Metropolitan Joseph also signed the document. Two days later he announced to his Petrograd vicars, pastors and flock that he was taking upon himself the leadership of the Petrograd diocese. This persuaded the authorities to arrest him on February 29, and send him again to the Nikolo-Modensky monastery. On March 11 Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod placed Metropolitan Joseph under ban. However, this did not prevent him from continuing to direct his two bishops in Petrograd, Archbishop Demetrius and Bishop Sergius, who also acted as a unifying focus for many True Orthodox in other parts of the country.

Thus was born the "Josephite" movement, the most important branch of the Catacomb Church in the inter-war years… In this birth in the winter of 1927-28 we can see the rebirth of the spirit of the 1917-18 Council. In the previous decade, first under Patriarch Tikhon and then under Metropolitan Peter, the original fierce tone of reproach and rejection of the God-hating authorities, epitomized above all by the anathematization of Soviet power, had gradually softened under the twin pressures of the Bolsheviks from without and the renovationists from within. Although the apocalyptic spirit of the Council remained alive in the masses, and prevented the Church leaders from actually commemorating the antichristian power, compromises continued to be made – compromises that were never repaid by compromises on the part of the Bolsheviks.

However, these acts did not cross the line separating compromise from apostasy. That line was passed by Metropolitan Sergius when he recognized *the God-cursed power to be God-established*, and ordered its commemoration while banning the commemoration of the confessing bishops. Already in the official church calendar for 1928 Sergius' church was looking like a Sovietized institution through its inclusion among the feasts of the church of: the memory of the Leader of the Proletariat Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (on the 32nd Sunday after Pentecost), the Overthrow of the Autocracy (in the Third Week of the Great Fast), the memory of the Paris Commune (the same week), the Day of the Internationale and the Day of the Proletarian Revolution.[163]

At this point the spirit of the 1918 Council flared up again in all its original strength. For, as a "Letter from Russia" put it many years later: "It's no use our manoeuvring; there's nothing for us to preserve except the things that are God's. For the things that are Caesar's (if one should really consider it to be Caesar and not Pharaoh) are always associated with the quenching of the Spirit."[164] Again, as Protopresbyter Michael Polsky wrote: "The Orthodoxy that submits to the Soviets and has become a weapon of the worldwide antichristian deception is not Orthodoxy, but the deceptive heresy of antichristianity clothed in the torn raiment of historical Orthodoxy…"[165]

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[163] *Pravoslavnoe obozrenie* (Orthodox Review), St. Petersburg, №10 (23), 1999, p. 2.

[164] *Russkaia Mysl'* (Orthodox Thought), № 3143, March 17, 1977.

[165] Polsky, *O Tserkvi v SSSR* (On the Church in the USSR), New York – Montreal, 1993, p. 13.

15. THE MARTYRDOM OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH

From the beginning Metropolitan Sergius declared his opponents to be politically motivated. Thus in his Declaration he said: "The establishment of Soviet power seemed to many to be a kind of misunderstanding, accidental and therefore not long-lasting… To such people, who do not wish to understand 'the signs of the times', it may seem that it is impossible to break with the previous regime, and even with the monarchy, without breaking with Orthodoxy." On December 31 he and his Synod declared: "Only those wish to be in administrative separation from us who cannot renounce the idea of Christianity as an external force and are inclined to see the triumph of Christianity in the world only in the domination of Christian peoples over non-Christian ones" – in other words, in capitalist imperialism. Again, to the Petrograd delegation he said in the same month: "You are hindered from accepting my appeal by a political counter-revolutionary ideology."[166]

The truth, however, was that it was Sergius, not his opponents, who were motivated by political considerations – in particular, his need to please his political communist masters. So the accusations were hypocritical. In any case, if his opponents' crimes were political, it was not for him to impose ecclesiastical bans on them – as he himself had recognized in 1926.

And yet this is precisely what he did, as we have seen. Moreover, he went so far as to call the Catacomb Church graceless. On August 6, 1929 his synod declared: "The sacraments performed in separation from Church unity… by the followers of the former Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Leningrad, the former Bishop Demetrius (Lyubimov) of Gdov, the former Bishop Alexis (Buj) of Urazov, as also of those who are under ban, are also invalid, and those who are converted from these schisms, if they have been baptized in schism, are to be received through Holy Chrismation."[167]

However, as even the sergianist Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky) had to admit, these "schismatics" were among the finest hierarchs of the Russian Church: "It is the best pastors who have fallen away and cut themselves off, those who by their purity in the struggle with renovationism stood much higher than the others."[168]

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[166] Mazyrin, "Prichiny", op. cit.

[167] The area occupied by the "Bujevtsy" in Tambov, Voronezh and Lipetsk provinces had been the focus of a major peasant rebellion against Soviet power in 1921. It continued to be a major stronghold of True Orthodoxy for many decades to come. See A.I. Demianov, *Istinno Pravoslavnoe Khristianstvo*, 1977, Voronezh University Press; "New Information on the True Orthodox Christians", *Radio Liberty Research*, March 15, 1978, pp. 1-4; Christel Lane, *Christian Religion in the Soviet Union*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978. ch. 4; "Registered and unregistered churches in Voronezh region", *Keston News Service*, 3 March, 1988, p. 8.

[168] Michael Shkarovsky, "Iosiflianskoe Dvizhenie i Oppozitsia v SSSR (1927-1943)" (The Josephite Movement and Opposition in the USSR (1927-1943)), *Minuvshee* (The Past), № 15, 1994, p. 450.

How many bishops supported Sergius?

According to Sergius Shumilo, "in a letter to his deputy, Archbishop Demetrius (Lyubimov) of Gdov, Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovich) of Petrograd wrote that already by the beginning of 1928 26 bishops had separated from Metropolitan Sergius. By the beginning of the 1930s, they already numbered about 40. Gradually their number increased still further All these hierarchs had zealously opposed renovationism and remained faithful to Patriarch Tikhon in 1922-1923 (let us recall that in 1922 only 36 bishops remained faithful to the 'Tikhonite' church, while 37 (headed by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Alexis (Simansky) recognized the renovationist 'HCA'."[169]

According to another estimate, out of the approximately 150 Russian bishops in 1927, 80 declared themselves definitely against the declaration, 17 separated from Sergius but did not make their position clear, and 9 at first separated but later changed their mind.[170] These figures probably do not take into account all the secret bishops consecrated by the Ufa Autocephaly… In 1930 Sergius claimed he had 70% of the Orthodox bishops (not including the renovationists and Gregorians), which implies that about 30% of the Russian episcopate joined the Catacomb Church.[171] According to the Catholic Bishop Michel D'Erbigny, once the Vatican's representative in Russia, three quarters of the episcopate separated from him; but this is probably an exaggeration.[172]

In 1929, the Bolsheviks began to imprison the True Orthodox on the basis of membership of a "church monarchist organization" called "True Orthodoxy". The main case against the True Orthodox was called the case of "The All-Union Counter-Revolutionary Church Monarchist Organization, 'the True Orthodox Church'". I.I. Osipova notes that the numbers of True Orthodox Christians arrested between 1929 and 1933 exceeded by seven times the numbers of clergy repressed from 1924 to 1928.[173] In 1929 5000 clergy were repressed, three times more than in 1928; in 1930 – 13,000; in 1931-32 – 19,000.[174]

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[169] Shumilo, op. cit., p. 49.

[170] *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 7.

[171] Pospielovsky, "Mitropolit Sergij i raskoly sprava", op. cit., p. 70.

[172] D'Erbigny and Alexandre Deubner, *Evêques Russes en Exil – Douze ans d'Epreuves 1918-1930* (Russian Bishops in Exile – Twelve Years of Trials, 1918-1930), Orientalia Christiana, vol. XXI, № 67.

[173] I.I. Osipova, "Istoria Istinno Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi po Materialam Sledstvennago Dela" (The History of the True Orthodox Church according to Materials from the Interrogation Process), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 2. According to *Slovar' Ateista* (The Atheist's Dictionary) (Moscow, 1964), "613 priests and monks" entered the True Orthodox Church – a gross underestimate.

[174] Ospova, *O Premiloserdij… Budi s nami neotstupno…Vospominania veruiuschikh Istinno-Pravoslavnoj (Katakombnoj) Tserkvi. Konets 1920-kh – nachalo 1970-kh godov.* (O Most Merciful One… Remain with us without fail. Reminiscences of believers of the True-Orthodox (Catacomb) Church. End of the 1920s – beginning of the 1970s), Moscow, 2008.

It is hardly a coincidence that this persecution of the Church took place against the background of collectivization and a general attack on religion[175] spearheaded by Yaroslavsky's League of Militant Godless (who numbered 17 million by 1933).

Vladimir Rusak writes: "1928, the beginning of collectivisation. Stalin could no longer 'leave the Church in the countryside'. In one interview he gave at that time he directly complained against 'the reactionary clergy' who were poisoning the souls of the masses. 'The only thing I can complain about is that the clergy was not liquidated root and branch,' he said. At the 15th Congress of the party he demanded that all weariness in the anti-religious struggle be overcome."[176]

Also in 1928, economic cooperatives and all philanthropic organizations were banned.[177] Then came the real killer, collectivization, which, together with the artificially induced famine that followed, claimed as many as 14 million lives. Collectivization can be seen as an attempt to destroy religion in its stronghold, the countryside, by destroying the economic base of village life and forcing all the villagers into communes completely dependent on the State. The peasants, led by their priests, put up a fierce opposition to it, and many were brought to trial and sentenced to the camps.

W. Husband writes: "On 8 April 1929, the VtsIK and Sovnarkom declaration 'On Religious Associations' largely superseded the 1918 separation of church and state and redefined freedom of conscience. Though reiterating central aspects of the 1918 separation decree, the new law introduced important limitations. Religious associations of twenty or more adults were allowed, but only if registered and approved in advance by government authorities. They retained their previous right to the free use of buildings for worship but still could not exist as a judicial person. Most important, the new regulations rescinded the previously guaranteed [!] right to conduct religious propaganda, and it reaffirmed the ban on religious instructions in state educational institutions. In effect, proselytising and instruction outside the home were illegal except in officially sanctioned classes, and religious rights of assembly and property were now more circumscribed."[178]

"Henceforth," writes Nicholas Werth, "any activity 'going beyond the limits of the simple satisfaction of religious aspirations' fell under the law. Notably, section 10 of the much-feared Article 58 of the penal code stipulated that 'any use of the religious prejudices of the masses… for destabilizing the state' was punishable 'by anything from a minimum three-year sentence up to and including the death penalty'. On 26 August 1929 the government instituted the new five-day work week – five days of work, and one day of rest – which made it impossible to observe Sunday as a day of rest. This measure deliberately introduced 'to facilitate the struggle to eliminate religion'.

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[175] Although the Protestants had welcomed the revolution and thus escaped the earlier persecutions, they were now subjected to the same torments as the Orthodox (Pospielovsky, "Podvig very", op. cit., pp. 233-34).

[176] Rusak, *Svidetel'stvo Obvinenia* (Witness for the Prosecution), Jordanville, 1987, part I, p. 176.

[177] M.I. Odintsev, "Put' dlinoiu v sem' desiatiletij; ot konfrontatsii k sotrudnichestvu" (A Path Seven Decades Long: from Confrontation to Cooperation), in *Na puti k svobode sovesti* (n the Path to Freedom of Conscience), op. cit., p. 41.

[178] Husband, *"Godless Communists"*, Northern University of Illinois Press, 2000, p. 66.

"These decrees were no more than a prelude to a second, much larger phase of the antireligious campaign. In October 1929 the seizure of all church bells was ordered because 'the sound of bells disturbs the right to peace of the vast majority of atheists in the towns and the countryside'. Anyone closely associated with the church was treated like a kulak and forced to pay special taxes. The taxes paid by religious leaders increased tenfold from 1928 to 1930, and the leaders were stripped of their civil rights, which meant that they lost their ration cards and their right to medical care. Many were arrested, exiled, or deported. According to the incomplete records, more than 13,000 priests were 'dekulakised' in 1930. In many villages and towns, collectivisation began symbolically with the closure of the church, and dekulakization began with the removal of the local religious leaders. Significantly, nearly 14 percent of riots and peasant uprisings in 1930 were sparked by the closure of a church or the removal of its bells. The antireligious campaign reached its height in the winter of 1929-30; by 1 March 1930, 6,715 churches had been closed or destroyed. In the aftermath of Stalin's famous article 'Dizzy with Success' on 2 March 1930, a resolution from the Central Committee cynically condemned 'inadmissible deviations in the struggle against religious prejudices, particularly the administrative closure of churches without the consent of the local inhabitants'. This formal condemnation had no effect on the fate of the people deported on religious grounds.

"Over the next few years these great offensives against the church were replaced by daily administrative harassment of priests and religious organizations. Freely interpreting the sixty-eight articles of the government decree of 8 April 1929, and going considerably beyond their mandate when it came to the closure of churches, local authorities continued their guerrilla war with a series of justifications: 'unsanitary condition or extreme age' of the buildings in question, 'unpaid insurance', and non-payment of taxes or other of the innumerable contributions imposed on the members of religious communities. Stripped of their civil rights and their right to teach, and without the possibility of taking up other paid employment – a status that left them arbitrarily classified as 'parasitic elements living on unearned wages' – a number of priests had no option but to become peripatetic and to lead a secret life on the edges of society."[179]

Vladimir Rusak writes: "[In 1929] about 15 hierarchs who did not share the position of Metropolitan Sergius were arrested. Metropolitan Cyril, the main 'opponent' of Metropolitan Sergius, was exiled to Turukhansk in June-July. The arrest procedure looked something like this: an agent of the GPU appeared before a bishop and put him a direct question: what is your attitude to the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius? If the bishop replied that he did not recognize it, the agent drew the conclusion: that means that you are a counter-revolutionary. The bishop was arrested."[180]

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[179] Werth, "A State against its People", in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 172-173.

Although the believers could not stop the might of the totalitarian state, God sometimes put the persecutors to flight. Thus the Catacomb Christian P.M. writes: "I want to tell about the miracles of God of which I was a witness. In our village they closed the church and made it into a club. And then they declared that they would be showing a film – this was the first opening of the club. In the church everything was as it had been before, even the iconostasis was standing with its icons. They put in benches, hung up a screen and began to show the film. About half an hour passed, and then suddenly the people began to shout. Those who were at the back jumped up and rushed towards the exit, while those in front fell on the floor or crawled under the benches. What had happened? As many people later recounted, the holy Great Martyr George came out of an icon that was on the iconostasis on a horse, and taking a spear, galloped at the people, who began to flee in fear. But that was not the end of it. Somehow they got at any rate some of the people together again and continued to show the film. It was being shown by a mechanic and his assistant. And suddenly up in the choir they began to sing the Cherubic hymn – and so loudly that the film was scarcely audible. At that point they decided that some believers had climbed up and wanted to interrupt the showing of the film. So about seven members of the Komsomol and the assistant climbed up in order to catch them all and bring them down. But then they said that when they had climbed up the stairs the singing stopped, and they rejoiced – the believers had got frightened and fallen silent. But when they climbed up into the choir they saw that it was empty. They stood in bewilderment and could not understand how the singers could have run away. And then suddenly in the midst of them unseen singers began to sing the Cherubic hymn. Pursued by an unknown fear, they rushed to get out, not knowing the way, pushing and shoving each other. The assistant mechanic, who was running in front, suddenly fell down, and everyone ran over him since there was no other way because of the narrowness of the place. Having run down, they rushed out into the street. Now the showing was finally abandoned. The assistant mechanic was ill for a month and died, while the mechanic left, and nobody wanted to go to work in the club as a mechanic for any money. So from that time they stopped having a cinema in it."[181]

This persecution began to arouse criticism in the West, from Pope Pius XI and the Archbishop of Canterbury. On February 14, 1930 the Politburo decided "to entrust to Comrades Yaroslavsky, Stalin and Molotov the decision of the question of an interview" to counter-act these criticisms. The result was two interviews, the first to Soviet correspondents on February 15 and published on February 16 in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* in the name of Sergius and those members of his Synod who were still in freedom, and a second to foreign correspondents three days later. In the first interview, which is now thought to have been composed entirely by the Bolsheviks with the active participation of Stalin, but whose authenticity was never denied by Sergius[182], it was asserted that "in the Soviet Union there was not and is not now any religious persecution", that "churches are closed not on the orders of the authorities, but at the wish of the population, and in many cases even at the request of the believers", that "the priests themselves are to blame, because they do not use the opportunities presented to them by the freedom to preach" and that "the Church herself does not want to have any theological-educational institutions".[183]

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[180] Rusak, op. cit. p. 175.

[181] http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=1221.

This interview, writes Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky, "was especially absurd and scandalous in the eyes of the simple people in that the universally venerated chapel of the Iveron Icon of the Mother of God had just been destroyed. As N. Talberg writes, 'the Russian people, fearing not even the chekists, demonstrated their attitude to him (Metropolitan Sergius)… When Metropolitan Sergius went to serve in one of the large churches of Moscow, the crowd whistled at him in the streets, which had never happened before in spite of the most desperate agitation of the atheists. Bishop Pitirim, one of those who had signed the declaration in the press, was also whistled at and met in the same way. *Paris-Midi* for March 5 (№ 1392) informed its readers of the insults Metropolitan Sergius had been subjected to by his flock in Moscow. *Vozrozhdenie* for March 6 (№ 178) printed the report of the Berlin *Lokale Anzeiger* to the effect that when Metropolitan Sergius 'came out of the altar to serve the Liturgy, the crowd began to whistle and showered him with brickbats: "traitor", "Judas", "coward", etc. The noise was so great that Metropolitan Sergius was not able to serve and went into the crowd to pacify them. But the aroused parishioners tried to tear his vestments from him, spat at him and wanted to take off his patriarchal cross. Metropolitan Sergius had to leave the church. He tried to serve the Liturgy in another church, but the believers boycotted his service.' The Roman newspaper *Today* (№ 64), reporting the same incident, added that 'not one person' appeared at the service arranged by Metropolitan Sergius for the other church."[184]

Commenting on the interview, Archbishop Andrew of Ufa wrote: "Such is the opinion of the false-head of the false-patriarchal church of Metropolitan Sergius… But who is going to recognize this head after all this? For whom does this lying head remain a head, in spite of his betrayal of Christ?… All the followers of the lying Metropolitan Sergius… have fallen away from the Church of Christ. The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is somewhere else, not near Metropolitan Sergius and not near 'his Synod'."[185]

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[182] Igor Kurlyandsky, "Nash Otvet Rimskomu Pape: kak tt. Stalin, Yaroslavsky i Molotov v 1930 godu pisali 'interview' Mitropolita Sergia i ego Sinoda" (Our Reply to the Pope of Rome: How Comrades Stalin, Yaroslavsky and Molotov wrote the 'interview' of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod in 193), *Politicheskij Zhurnal* (The Political Journal), 183-184, 21, April, 2008; http://www.politjournal.ru/index.php?action=Articles&dirid=50&tek=8111&issue=218.

[183] Grabbe, op. cit., p. 78; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 10-11.

[184] Krasovitsky, Sergianskij raskol v perspective preodolenia (The Sergianist Schism with a view to Its Overcoming), Moscow, samizdat, p. 25.

[185] Zelenogorsky, M. *Zhizn' i deiatel'nost' Arkhiepiskopa Andrea (Kniazia Ukhtomskogo)* (The Life and Activity of Archbishop Andrew (Prince Ukhtomsky), Moscow, 1991, p. 216.

According to Archbishop Bartholomew (Remov), who never joined the Catacomb Church, bu who knew Church life in Moscow well, the whole activity of Metropolitan Sergius was carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Bolsheviks…[186]

Religious life did not cease but rather intensified in the underground. Wandering clergy served the faithful in secret locations around the country. Particular areas buzzed with underground activity. Thus Professor Ivan Andreyevsky testified that during the war he personally knew some 200 places of worship of the Catacomb Church in the Leningrad area alone. Popovsky writes that the Catacomb Church "arose in our midst at the end of the 20s. First one, then another priest disappeared from his parish, settled in a secret place and began the dangerous life of exiles. In decrepit little houses on the outskirts of towns chapels appeared. There they served the Liturgy, heard confessions, gave communion, baptized, married and even ordained new priests. Believers from distant towns and regions poured there in secret, passing on to each other the agreed knock on the door."[187]

In these conditions of extreme persecution, it was almost impossible to unite the scattered groups of True Orthodox under a common leadership. But attempts were made… Thus we can infer from a remark of Hieromartyr Maximus, Bishop of Serpukhov, that there was *some* Catacomb Council in 1928 that anathematized the Sergianists.[188] Another source has described a so-called "Nomadic Council" attended at different times by over 70 bishops in 1928 which likewise anathematized the Sergianists. But hard evidence for the existence of this council has proved hard to obtain[189], and there are some reasons for suspecting the authenticity of the description of the proceedings.[190]

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[186] *Za Khrista Postradavshie* (Suffered for Christ), Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1997, p. 220). Bartholomew became a Catholic, which may undermine the strength of his evidence in the eyes of some.

[187] Grabbe, op. cit., p. 79.

[188] His words, as reported by Protopresbyter Michael Polsky (*Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie*, vol. II, p. 30), were: "The secret, desert, Catacomb Church has anathematized the 'Sergianists' and all those with them."

[189] Our information about this Council is based exclusively on Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': Kochuiushchij Sobor 1928 g." ("The Catacomb Church: The 'Nomadic' Council of 1928"), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997, whose main source is claimed to be the archives of the president of the Council, Bishop Mark (Novoselov), as researched by the Andrewite Bishop Evagrius. Some historians, such as Pavel Protsenko ("Skvoz' mif ob 'Istinnoj Tserkvi'", *Russkij Pastyr'*, 35, III-1999, pp. 84-97), dismiss the authenticity of the Council completely. Others, such as Osipova ("V otvet na statiu 'Mif ob "Istinnoj Tserkvi"'" (In Reply to the Article, "The Myth of 'the True Church'"), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997, pp. 18-19) and Danilushkin (op. cit., p. 534) appear to accept the existence of this Council. But it is difficult to find anything other than oblique supporting evidence for it, and von Sievers has refused to allow the present writer to see the archives. A Smirnov (perhaps von Sivers himself) writes that the "noncommemorating" branch of the Catacomb Church, whose leading priest was Fr. Sergius Mechev, had bishops who "united in a constantly active Preconciliar Convention" and who were linked with each other by special people called 'svyazniki'" ("Ugasshie nepominaiushchie v bege vremeni" (The Extinguished Non-Commemorators in the Passing of Time), *Simvol* (Symbol), № 40, 1998, p. 174).

[190] "We cannot believe that in the Act of that Council, which was allegedly undersigned by 70 hierarchs of the Greco-Russian Church, the Savior's name was written as Isus, the way Old Rite Believers wrote it, and

A "Little Council" of Catacomb bishops took place in Archangelsk in 1935. They met in order to approve an epistle issued in December, 1933 by Archbishop Seraphim of Uglich placing Metropolitan Sergius under ban for the anti-church actions he had committed since 1927: "We declare Metropolitan Sergius, who has violated the purity of the Orthodox faith, who has distorted the dogma of Salvation and of the Church, and who has caused a schism and blasphemed against the Church of Christ and Her confessors, and in scattering the Church has also blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, to be deprived of communion in prayer with us and with all the Orthodox bishops of the Russian Church. We commit him to ecclesiastical trial and ban him from serving. The bishops who think like Metropolitan Sergius are accepted by us into canonical and prayerful communion in accordance with the rite of reception from renovationism." One of those participating in this Council was Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk.[191]

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the way Ambrose himself does. Furthermore, the hierarchs could not have unanimously excommunicated the Council of 166-1667 as 'an assembly of rogues'. The Council could not have agreed to recognize all the name-worshipping believers as 'true believers', thus easily ending the stalemate unresolved by the Council of 1917-1918. The procedure of assignment by hierarchs of casting vote powers to their proxies, which violated the provisions of the 1917-1918 Local Council, could not have been adopted without any deliberation or objections at all. The seventy attending hierarchs could not have been unaware of the fact that only the First Hierarch, Metropolitan Peter, had the power to convene a Local Council…" (*Vertograd* (English edition), December, 1998, p. 31).

However, Sergius Firsov is of a different opinion: "The style of the documents, the words used in them and the form of the cited proofs force [us] to admit that the published documents were created in the 1920s and are not a later forgery" ("Mitropolit Sergij (Stragorodsky) v Otsenkakh i Mneniakh Sovremennikov (k Postanovke Voprosa)" (Evaluation of, and Opinions about, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) by his Contemporaries (Towards Setting the Question)", http://krotov.info/history/20/1900/firsov_strag.html, p. 8).

[191] M.V. Shkarovsky, *Sud'by iosiflyanskikh pastyrej. Iosiflyanskoye dvizhenie RPTs v sud'bakh ego uchastnikov. Arkhivniye dokumenty* (The Destinies of the Josephite Pastors. The Josephite Movement of the ROC in the Destinies of its Participants. Archive Documents), St. Petersburg, 2006, p. 542; "Novie dannia k zhizneopisaniu sviashchennomuchenika Fyodora, arkhiepiskopa Volokolamskogo, osnovannia na protokolakh doprosov 1937 g." (New Data towards a Biography of Hieromartyr Theodore, Archbishop of Volokolamsk), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 48, № 8 (584), August, 1998, pp. 6-7.

16. ROCOR AND METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

Probably late in 1927, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) wrote: "Now everywhere two epistles are being published in the newspapers and are being read in many churches which until recently were Orthodox – epistles of two, alas, former beloved pupils of mine with whom I was once in agreement, Metropolitans Sergius and Eulogius, who have now fallen away from the saving unity of the Church and have bound themselves to the enemies of Christ and the Holy Church – the disgusting blaspheming Bolsheviks, who have submitted themselves in everything to the representatives of the Jewish false teaching which everywhere goes under the name of communism or materialism… Let these new deceivers not justify themselves by declaring that they are not the friends of the Bolsheviks and Jews who stand at the head of the Bolshevik kingdom: in their souls they may not be their friends, but they have submitted, albeit unwillingly, to these enemies of Christ, and they are trying to increase their power not only over the hapless inhabitants of Holy Russia, but also over all Russian people."

On September 1, 1927, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava wrote: "It is impossible to recognize the epistle of Metropolitan Sergius as obligatory for ourselves. The just-completed Council of Bishops rejected this epistle. It was necessary to act in this way on the basis of the teaching of the Holy Fathers on what should be recognized as a canonical power to which Christians must submit. St. Isidore of Pelusium, having pointed to the presence of the God-established order of the submission of some to others everywhere in the life of rational and irrational beings, draws the conclusion: 'Therefore we are right to say that the thing in itself, I mean power, that is, authority and royal power, have been established by God. But if a lawless evildoer seizes this power, we do not affirm that he has been sent by God, but we say that he, like Pharaoh, has been *permitted* to spew out this cunning and thereby inflict extreme punishment on and bring to their senses those for whom cruelty was necessary, just as the King of Babylon brought the Jews to their senses.' (*Works,* part II, letter 6). Bolshevik power in its essence is an antichristian power and there is no way that it can recognized as God-established."[192]

On September 5, the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR declared:

"1. The abroad part of the all-Russian Church must cease relations with the Moscow church authorities in view of the impossibility of normal relations with them and in view of its enslavement to the atheist Soviet power which deprives it of its freedom in its administration of the Church.

"2. So as to free our hierarchy in Russia from responsibility for the non-recognition of Soviet power by the abroad part of our Church, until the re-establishment of normal relations with Russia and until the liberation of our Church from the persecutions of Soviet power, the abroad part of our Church must administer itself in accordance with the sacred canons, the definitions of the Sacred Council of the All-Russian Local Orthodox Church of 1917-18 and the decree of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the Higher Administrative Council of November 7/20, 1920, with the help of the Hierarchical Synod and the Council of Bishops, under the presidency of Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev.

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[192] Archbishop Theophan, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1976; translated in *Selected Letters,* Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1989.

"3. The abroad part of the Russian Church considers itself to be an inseparable, spiritually-at-one branch of the Great Russian Church. It does not separate itself from its Mother Church and does not consider itself autocephalous. As before, it considers its head to be the Patriarchal Locum Tenens Metropolitan Peter and commemorates his name in Divine services.

"4. If there will come a decree of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod on the exclusion of the abroad bishops and clergy who do not want to sign their loyalty to the Soviet government from the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate, this decree will be uncanonical."

On May 9, 1928 Metropolitan Sergius threatened to ban the ROCOR hierarchs if they did not dissolve their Administration. On June 20, his Synod issued another ukaz to the Church Abroad declaring that any clergyman who recognized the Moscow Synod but did not accept Soviet citizenship would be removed from his post.[193] Nobody obeyed this ukaz…

On August 28, 1928, Metropolitan Anthony issued "the completely definitive declaration of our Synod of Bishops that the Moscow Synod has deprived itself of all authority, since it has entered into agreement with the atheists, and without offering any resistance it has tolerated the closing and destruction of the holy churches, and the other innumerable crimes of the Soviet government… That illegally formed organization which has entered into union with God's enemies, which Metropolitan Sergius calls an Orthodox Synod – but which the best Russian hierarchs, clergy and laymen have refused to recognize - … must not be recognized by our Orthodox Churches, nor by our Synod of Bishops with its flock here abroad. Furthermore, the organization of the Moscow Synod must be recognized to be exactly the same sort of apostates from the Faith as the ancient libellatici, that is, Christians who although they refused to blaspheme openly against Christ and offer sacrifices to the idols, nevertheless still received from the priests of the idols false documents verifying that they were in complete accord with the adherents of pagan religion…"[194]

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[193] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 4.

[194] *Pis'ma Blazhenneishago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskogo)* (The Letters of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), op. cit., pp. 105-106, quoted in the *Archpastoral Epistle of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, 1969* and translated in *Orthodox Christian Witness*, March 8/21, 1982. Metropolitan Anthony secretly distributed this encyclical with an appeal to the archpastors to join

Unfortunately, however, this "completely definitive" statement did not prove to be *completely* definitive for the ROCOR hierarchs in years to come; their attitude to the Moscow Patriarchate wavered between strictness and condescension…

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Early in 1930, just after Sergius had given his interview denying that there had ever been persecutions against the faith in Soviet Russia, the archbishop of Canterbury invited Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris to go to London for one day of prayers for the suffering Church of Russia. "I decided to go," he wrote. "The whole of England will pray for us, and I will remain in Paris as a witness of the unanimous sympathy of all the Churches for our suffering Church, but not take part? Impossible! My conscience ordered me to take part in these prayers; and my flock undoubtedly felt the same way.

"I spent about a week in England. It is a long time since I experienced such a radiant feeling of brotherly Christian love between the Churches as I experienced in those unforgettable days, when the whole of ecclesiastical and believing England prayed on her knees for a cessation of the terrible sufferings of our Russian Orthodox Church… I pursued no political aims in England, and nowhere gave political speeches. Everywhere that I had to give speeches I only gave thanks for their sympathy and asked them to support our suffering Mother Church by their prayers. And now these speeches have served as an excuse for a strict inquiry from Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow: on what basis could I allow myself to go round England calling people to protest against the USSR? Then it was demanded that I condemn my journey and give an undertaking not to repeat such speeches… It was bitter for me to read these unjust reproaches, which were dictated by Soviet power, and I replied sharply to Metropolitan Sergius that my prayers in England did not have a political, but only a religious character: it was a protest of the religious and in general the human conscience against the terrible persecutions against the Church in Soviet Russia…"[195]

On June 10, 1930, Sergius retired Metropolitan Evlogy from his post administering the Russian parishes in Western Europe. On July 10 Evlogy broke communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, and in February was received by Constantinople…

ROCOR; it was widely read among the Josephites (Shkarovsky, M.B. "Iosiflianskoe dvizhenie i 'Sviataia Rus'" (The Josephite Movement and 'Holy Russia'), *Mera* (Measure), 1995, # 3, p. 101).

[195] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 13. If Metropolitan Sergius had been thinking ecclesiastically rather than politically, he would have protested, not at the supposedly political character of Metropolitan Evlogy's visits to England, but at his violation of the canons by his recognizing the Anglican clergy. Thus on May 16, 1935, on the initiative of the Russian Clergy and Church Aid Fund, a prayer service was arranged in London for the cessation of the persecutions against the faith in Soviet Russia. Metropolitan Evlogy came again, together with ROCOR's Archbishops Anastasy and Seraphim. During the service in the Anglican church the Orthodox hierarchs stood with their mantias on. Then, at a liturgy and moleben in the Russian church many Anglican clergy stood and prayed in their vestments. (*Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), 6, 1935, pp. 100-101; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 47)

On May 6, 1933 Metropolitan Anthony wrote to Sergius, who had reproached the ROCOR bishops for abandoning their sees: "… It is not from you and not for us to hear an exhortation to martyrdom, which we would not have avoided if we had stayed in the South of Russia. We are ready to listen to it and to many such reproaches, if we deserve them, from those who even now display an example of confession, and have not, like you, sold the purity of the faith for a mess of pottage of seeming freedom, which is in fact the most heavy and shameful slavery…

"What divides you from us is the fact that you, in your desire to guarantee a secure existence for your ecclesiastical centre, have tried to unite light with darkness. You have fallen into the temptation whose essence was revealed in the holy Gospel. Once the spirit of evil tried to draw even the Son of God Himself by a picture of external easy success, placing as a condition His worship of him, the son of destruction. You have not followed the example of Christ, the holy martyrs and confessors, who rejected such a compromise, but have bowed down to the age-old enemy of our salvation, when, for the sake of an illusory success, for the sake of the preservation of an external organization, you declared that the joys of the godless authorities are your joys and its enemies your enemies. You even tried to remove the crowns from the recent martyrs and confessors (including yourself, for I know that once you showed firmness and were in prison), affirming that they are suffering imprisonment, exile and torments not for the name of Christ, but as counter-revolutionaries. In this way you blasphemed against them. You denigrated their exploit, and dampened the enthusiasm of those who could have been numbered to the ranks of the martyrs for the faith. You excommunicated them from the flower and adornment of the Russian church. In this neither I nor my brothers abroad will ever follow you… We have no intercourse with the Orthodox archpastors, pastors and laymen who are imprisoned in Russia, except that we pray for them and know that they suffer only for the faith, though the persecutors charge them with State crimes which are alien to them, as the enemies of the Christians loved to do in ancient times… For you the way of the cross is now madness like it was to the Greeks contemporary with the Apostles (I Corinthians 1.23). I implore you, as a pupil and friend, free yourself from this temptation, renounce publicly every lie which Tuchkov and other enemies of the Church have put into your mouth, do not yield in the face of probably tortures. If you are counted worthy of a martyr's crown, the earthly and heavenly Churches will combine in glorification of your courage and of the Lord Who strengthened you; but if you stay on this wide path leading you to perdition (Matthew 7.13), on which you stand now, you will be ignominiously led to the pit of hell and until the end of its earthly existence the Church will not forget your betrayal. I always think of this when I look at the panagia of the Vladimir Mother of God with the engraved inscription which you presented to me twenty years ago: 'To a dear teacher and friend.' Your further words in this inscription are: 'give us some of your oil, for our lamps are fading.' Here we offer you the salutary oil of faith and loyalty in the Holy Church. *Do not refuse it, but reunite with it* as in 1922 when you solemnly declared to Patriarch Tikhon your repentance for your former wavering loyalty. Do not refuse the friendly appeal of one who tenderly loved you and continues to love you. Metropolitan Anthony."[196]

On July 8, 1933 the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR issued an encyclical to the Russian Orthodox flock with regard to Sergius' epistle of March 23: "His appeal in its essence remains the same as it was in 1927 and can be formulated in the words: he who is with Soviet power is with the Russian Church; he who is against the former cannot be with the latter. In this way the link with the Mother Church can be realized for us in no other way than by accepting the God-fighting authorities that now rule in Russia. Before stretching out the hand of communion with Metropolitan Sergius, we must stretch it out first to the Bolsheviks and receive from them attestation of our political reliability, without which the deputy of the locum tenens cannot re-establish fraternal and canonical union with us…"[197]

At the same time, this encyclical, - penned, according to Archbishop Nicon, by Metropolitan Anastasy, - declared: "As regards relations toward the Mother Church, the Russian ecclesial organization abroad has considered itself no more than a branch of the latter, bound organically to the whole body of the Church of Russia, even though temporarily deprived only of outward unity with the latter in ecclesiastical administration.

"To the present day the entire Church organization abroad has considered and still considers itself an extraordinary and temporary institution, which must be abolished without delay after the restoration of normal social and ecclesiastical life in Russia.

"We are taking fully into account the extraordinary difficulties of the position of Metropolitan Sergius, who is now the de facto head of the Church of Russia, and are aware of the heavy burden of responsibility for the fate of the latter, which lies upon him. No one, therefore, has the audacity to accuse him for the mere attempt to enter into dialogue with the Soviet regime so as to obtain legal standing for the Church of Russia. Not without foundation does the deputy locum tenens of the Patriarchal Throne say in his aforementioned Declaration that only 'armchair dreamers can think that such a vast community as our Orthodox Church, with all its organization, can exist peacefully in a country while walling itself off from the authorities.' While the church exists on earth, it remains closely bound up with the fates of human society and cannot be imagined outside time and space. It is impossible for it to refrain from all contact with a powerful societal organization such as the government; otherwise it would have to leave the world."[198]

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[196] *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), № 8, 1933; in *Orthodox Life*, vol. 27 (2), March-April, 1977; Archbishop Nicon, *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievsago i Galitskago* (Biography of His Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. 6, pp. 263-269; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 24-27.

[197] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 27.

[198] http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/english/pages/history/1933epistle.html; http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/Poslania/poslanie.sobor.1933.html.

However, in his 1934 Paschal encyclical Metropolitan Anthony was stricter: "It is noteworthy that several hierarchs and their flocks, for the most part Russians, have already fallen away from Ecumenical unity, and to the question: 'What do you believe?', reply with references to self-proclaimed heads of all sorts of schisms in Moscow, America, and Western Europe. It is clear that, without admitting it, they have ceased to believe in the unity of the Church throughout the world. They try to bear calmly the refusal of the true Church to have relations with them, and imagine that one can save one's soul even without communion with Her… Unfortunately, some Orthodox laymen, even, alas, many priests (and hierarchs) have subjected themselves to this state of gracelessness, although still retaining the outward appearance of the church services and the apparent performance of the Mysteries…"[199]

On July 5, 1934, Metropolitan Sergius banned the ROCOR hierarchs. On August 7, Metropolitan Anthony wrote to Metropolitan Eleutherius of Lithuania explaining that he could not accept this ban because "a hierarch cannot be removed from his see except through a trial".[200] Now Eleutherius was a supporter of Sergius, and on the departure of Metropolitan Evlogy for Constantinople was entrusted with oversight of the patriarchal parishes in Western Europe. In 1935 he published a book defending the MP against ROCOR and Metropolitan Anthony, in which he argued that while Soviet power acted in the religious sphere "by the inspiration of Satan", Christians were still bound to obey it, because "all power is from God". If they obeyed Soviet power, as God commanded, then Soviet power, "would see this, and the Spirit of God would proclaim good things for the Church through it".[201]

Professor Ivan Ilyin subjected this argument to detailed criticism. The communists could not be simultaneously servants of God and servants of Satan. If they were acting "by the inspiration of Satan", as was clearly the case, then they had to be opposed. In any case, Church history contained many examples of hierarchs refusing to obey the secular authorities, beginning with the apostles who told the Sanhedrin: "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5.29).

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[199] On November 26 / December 9, 1979, Metropolitan Philaret of New York wrote to Abbess Magdalina of Lesna convent: "Ponder these last words of the great Abba: the apparent performance of the Mysteries… What horror! But these words of his concur totally with my own conviction regarding the gracelessness and inefficacy of schismatic Mysteries" – and he went on to make clear that he regarded the sacraments of the Moscow Patriarchate, and of the American and Parisian jurisdictions, to be graceless.

[200] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 40. It is interesting to note that Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina said the same thing when clarifying a pastoral epistle of his: "no clergyman, and certainly no hierarch, is to be deposed for wrong belief and excised from the universal body of the Eastern Orthodox Church without a prior trial and defense... For the age-old history of the Orthodox Church teaches us that no wrong-believing person who is liable to deposition and excision has ever been declared heretical or schismatic by Hierarchs acting in isolation, without any trial or defense, but by a valid and canonical Synod, coming together and taking counsel with the aid of the Holy Spirit and putting forth its vote of condemnation only after the defendant has stood trial and defended himself, and after all means of enlightenment and admonition have been exhausted..." (Letter of January 18, 1945; http://www.trueorthodoxy.org/schismatics_matthewites_postings.shtml)

[201] Metropolitan Eleutherius, *Moj Otvet Mitropolitu Antoniu* (My Reply to Metropolitan Anthony), Kovno, 1935, pp. 18, 67.

Ilyin quotes "the law of freedom" (James 1.25; I Peter 2.16) to illumine the meaning of the words "all power is from God". They "signify not that power is unrestrained, but that it is bound and limited. 'Being from God' *means being called* to the service of God and *undertaking* this service; it binds and limits this power. It does not mean that the power is free to do any baseness or abomination, sin or iniquity, and that, whatever it does, it will always 'come from God', and that obedience in conscience will be demanded by it from its subjects as if it were the voice of God. But it means that the power is established by God *for the doing of good and the overcoming of evil*; that it must rule precisely in this way, and not otherwise. And if it does rule in this way, the subjects are obliged to obey it out of conscience.

"Thus the calling of the power by God becomes for it a rule and obligation, as it were a court before the face of God. While the free obedience of subjects according to conscience turns out to be strengthened, but also limited, by this law. But how far is it 'limited'? To the extent that the law of Christian freedom calls them to loyalty or forbids them to show loyalty.

"And it is precisely to this freedom, infused with love, conscience and clear perception of its object, that we must turn for an exit when the power turns out to be in the hands of Satan, whom we can in no way serve or want to serve – neither out of fear, nor for conscience's sake. We can and must serve only God, for we are 'servants of God' (I Peter 2.16); we are called to serve Him *in freedom*, speaking and acting as people who must be judged, not according to the letter of the Scripture, but according to the law of freedom. And if it turns out that according to our free and object-directed Christian conscience (not out of arbitrariness or passion!), this power is satanic, then we are called to condemn it, refuse to obey it and conduct a struggle against it in word and deed, by no means using our Christian freedom in order to cover up evil, that is, without distorting the voice of our Christian conscience, and not embellishing the words of Satan and not ascribing them in crookedness of soul to Christ…"[202]

The issue dividing ROCOR and Metropolitan Sergius is often described by the supporters of Sergius as "political" – a question only of the political recognition of the Soviet regime. However, as the Catacomb confessor Professor Ivan Andreyev pointed out: "To dissociate oneself in principle from any politics is impossible for an Orthodox person, for religion and politics are at the present time organically blended. The question: to be with Christ or against Him, has a political meaning today, because it commits one to protesting against those political systems which have as their main goal the destruction of Christianity. Whoever at the present time denies the necessity of political discussions (reasoning) and jurisdictional explanations (interpretations) denies the necessity of distinguishing the wolves in sheep's clothing and finding out where Christ is and where the Antichrist…"[203]

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[202] Ilyin, "O 'Bogoustanovlennosti' sovietskoj vlasti" (On the 'God-establishedness' of Soviet Power), http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=lib&id=2711.

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[203] Andreev, *Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?,* Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, p. 54.

17. ARCHBISHOP ANDREW AND THE OLD RITUALISTS

As we have seen, Archbishop Andrew was a thorn in the side both of Metropolitan Peter and of Metropolitan Sergius.[204] In 1922 he had made his Ufa diocese autonomous on the basis of the Patriarch's ukaz № 362, and by the end of his life he had consecrated as many as 40 secret bishops, whose successors, it is claimed, have survived to the present day. Of hardly less importance were his controversial relations with the Old Ritualists, which, if successful, would have ended the 250-year-old schism in the Russian Church.

Just after the February revolution, Archbishop Andrew presided over the All-Russian Congress of Yedinovertsy (that is, converts to Orthodoxy from the Old Ritualists who were allowed to retain the Old Rite) in Nizhni-Novgorod. In May, 1917, together with the future hieromartyr-bishop Joseph (Petrovykh) and the yedinoverets Protopriest (later bishop and hieromartyr) Simon (Sheev), he visited the Rogozhskoe cemetery in Moscow, the spiritual centre of the Belokrinitsky Old Ritualist hierarchy, and handed over a letter from the Congress expressing a desire for union. However, the reply of the Old Ritualist bishops was negative.

But Vladyka's sympathy for the Old Ritualists went further than these early actions would suggest, and further than the opinion, which was generally accepted in his time, that the anathemas on the Old Rite were unjust and should be removed. Influenced by one of his teachers at the Academy, Professor N. Kapterev, he adopted a still more "liberal" attitude towards the Old Ritualists that has been a subject of controversy to this day. While continuing to recognize the pre-revolutionary Church, he considered that it had fallen into caesaropapism, or the "Niconian heresy" as he called it, and that it was "Niconianism" that had led to the Russian revolution and to the renovationist and sergianist submission of the Church to Soviet power. He often referred to the Orthodox as "Niconians", while calling the Old Ritualists "Ancient Orthodox", whose schism was not a schism, but precisely a protest against this unlawful encroachment on the freedom of the Church. Therefore Vladyka Andrew's attempted rapprochement with the Old Ritualists must be seen in the context of the main struggle of the times - the struggle of the Church against Soviet power and renovationist and sergianist caesaropapism.

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[204] On Archbishop Andrew's highly controversial life, see Paul Boiarschinov, "Sviashchennomuchenik Arkhiepiskop Andrei Ufimsky (v miru Kniaz' Ukhtomsky) - Izsledovanie Zhiznedeiatel'nosti" (Hieromartyr Archbishop Andrew of Ufa (in the world Prince Ukhtomsky), Diploma thesis, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1995; Chernov, op. cit; I.M. Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, 1982, chapter 19; Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Ekkleziologia arkhiepiskopa Andrea, Ufimskogo (kn. Ukhtomskogo)" (The Ecclesiology of Archbishop Andrew of Ufa (Prince Ukhtomsky), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi za Granitsei* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Church Abroad), № 2, 1993, pp. 20-24; "Gosudarstvo i 'katakomby'", in Filatov, S.B., op. cit., pp. 108-109, 111; "Katakombnaia Tserkov': Kochuiushchij Sobor 1928 g." (The Catacomb Church: the 'Nomadic Council' of 1928), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997; "Sviaschennomuchenik Andrej, Arkhiepiskop Ufimskij" (Hieromartyr Andrew, Archbishop of Ufa), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), № 5 (14), 1998, 1-30; Michael Podgornov, "Otpal li Arkhiepiskop Andrej (Ukhtomsky) v Staroobriadcheskij Raskol?" (Did Archbishop Andrew (Ukhtomsky) Fall Away into the Old Ritualist Schism?), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy) № 2 (11), 1998, 1-22; *Staroobriadchestvo* (Old Ritualism), Moscow: "Tserkov", 1996, pp. 25-26, 141-142; *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 6.

Let us turn to Archbishop Andrew's own account of his dealings with the Old Ritualists:- "In September, 1917 the so-called beglopopovtsi [i.e. those Old Ritualists who accepted runaway priests from the official Russian Church, but had no hierarchy of their own] approached me with the request that I become their bishop. At this time I was in Moscow at the 1917 Council. I agreed in principle, but on condition that my flock in Ufa should remain in my jurisdiction. It was Lev Alexeevich Molekhonov who was conducting negotiations with me on the side of the beglopopovtsi. He assembled in Moscow a small convention of representatives of other communities of theirs. At this convention, after long discussions, they agreed that my union with this group of Old Ritualists should take place in the following manner: I would come without vestments to the church of the beglopopovtsi in Moscow (on M. Andronievskaia street). They would meet me with the question: 'Who are you?' I would reply at first that I was a bishop of the Orthodox, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and them I would read the Symbol of Faith and a lengthy confession of faith, which everyone ordained to the episcopate would read. Then I, at the request of the beglopopovtsi, would anoint myself with the same chrism which they in 1917 called and considered to be patriarchal, which remained [to them] from Patriarch Joseph [(1642-1652), the last Moscow Patriarch recognized by both the Orthodox and the Old Ritualists]. With this my 'rite of reception' would come to an end.

"My spiritual father, Archbishop Anthony of Kharkov, knew about all these negotiations, and Patriarch Tikhon was informed about everything. They approved my intentions.

"Thus from both sides everything was measured, calculated, thought out and humanly speaking worked out in a manner completely acceptable for all. After this I went to Ufa.

"But then the events of 1918 and 1919 took place. The beglopopovtsi lost me for a long time. I was in Siberia and then in a difficult incarceration… But in 1925, when I was in exile in Ashkhabad [in 1923 Archbishop Andrew had again been arrested and sentenced to three years exile in Central Asia, first in Ashkhabad, and then in Tashkent], the beglopopovets Archimandrite Clement came to me and began to ask me again that I should become bishop for the beglopopovtsi…

"I agreed to do everything that I had promised to L.A. Molekhonov… Moreover, I agreed to become bishop for the beglopopovtsi only on condition that Archimandrite

Clement should himself receive consecration to the episcopate and would become de facto an active bishop, for I myself was chained to Askhabad or some other place for a long time.

"Clement accepted all my conditions and on August 28, 1925 we for the first time prayed together with him to God in a truly Orthodox, that is, not caesaropapist church [!]; I on my side had fulfilled everything that I had been blessed to do by Patriarch Tikhon. On September 3, 1925 I (together with Bishop Rufinus) consecrated Clement to the episcopate, giving him the authority to be my deputy, as it were, as long as I did not enjoy freedom of movement…

"After this we parted on the same day of September 3.

"But soon I received news from Bishop Clement that the beglopopovtsi recognised neither me nor him as their bishops and that he, Clement, had been received in his existing rank into the number of the bishops of the Belokrinitsky hierarchy."

The renovationist *Vestnik Sviashchennago Sinoda (Herald of the Holy Synod)* reported: "According to the report of Archimandrite Clement, Bishop Andrew did not agree to the second rite (i.e. chrismation) for a long time, and agreed only after sustained discussions with, or demands from Clement, based on the 95th canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (which orders that heretics should be united to Orthodoxy only through chrismation).

"Archbishop Andrew said the following to Clement before the chrismation: 'It is not your hand that is being lain upon me, but the hand of that patriarch who consecrated your ancient chrism: when you read the proclamation, and when I recite the heresies and confession of faith before chrismation, then I immediately become your bishop and can commune with you. But since I am your bishop, that means that a priest cannot anoint a bishop.'

"After this, Archbishop Andrew anointed himself with the Old Ritualist chrism [more exactly: the chrism consecrated by the Orthodox Patriarch Joseph] and read out the following confession of faith: 'I, Bishop Andrew, of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, who was consecrated to the rank of bishop on October 4, 1907 in front of the holy relics of the Kazan hierarchs Gurias and Barsanuphius and on the day of their commemoration, and who am now suffering persecution from the ruling hierarchy for the freedom of the Church of Christ, confess before the Holy Church that Patriarch Nicon in his wisdom disrupted the life and love of the Catholic Church, thereby laying the beginnings of the schism in the Russian Church. On the basis of Patriarch Nicon's mistake was established that caesaropapism which has, since the time of Patriarch Nicon, undermined all the roots of Russian Church life and was finally expressed in the formation of the so-called 'Living Church', which is at present the ruling hierarchy and which has transgressed all the church canons... But I, although I am a sinful and unworthy bishop, by the mercy of God ascribe myself to no ruling hierarchy and have always remembered the command of the holy Apostle Peter: 'Pasture the flock of God without lording it over God's inheritance'."

Hearing about the events in Ashkhabad, Metropolitan Peter, the patriarchal locum tenens, banned Archbishop Andrew from serving, although a later search in the Synodal offices revealed no such decree (Spravka by the Chancellor of the Patriarchal Synod, Archbishop Pitirim of Dmitrov on October 27, 1927 (№ 1799)).

However, Archbishop Andrew was not inclined to obey such a decree, whether genuine or not; for he considered Metropolitan Peter to be "an autocrat in clerical guise" who had ascended the ecclesiastical ladder by means of an intrigue, and the whole system of the succession of power in the Church by means of secret wills to be uncanonical. Thus he continued to "ascribe myself to no ruling hierarchy", and to rule the Ufa diocese on an autonomous basis until the convening of a Council of the whole Russian Church, consecrating no less than 40 bishops for the Catacomb Church – about 30 already by the beginning of 1927.

As regards the supposed ban on Archbishop Andrew by Metropolitan Peter, we must conclude either, if we are to believe Metropolitan Sergius, that "it may have been lost on the road", or, much more likely, that it never existed.

Unfortunately, this supposed ban by Metropolitan Peter caused him to be distrusted for a time by Archbishop Andrew. Fortunately, however, this distrust did not last, as we shall see…

Archbishop Andrew returned from exile to Ufa in 1926, and the people visited their Vladyka in unending streams. However, the Ufa clergy led by the newly appointed Bishop John met him with hostility and coldness.

One of his parishioners wrote in her diary: "The people search him out and revere him, and all the parishioners of various churches invite him to them, while the clergy does not accept him. There are many rumours, and no one knows what to believe... Bishop Andrew took up his residence in the workers' quarter on Samara street not far from the Simeonov church. He served in the Simeonov church, and in such a way, according to another eyewitness, that "we ascended to heaven and did not want to come down."

In July, 1926, Metropolitan Peter's deputy, Metropolitan Sergius, renewed the attack on Archbishop Andrew, and banned him from serving. However, even if we assume that the charges against him were justified, this ban was invalid, since it transgressed several canons according to which a bishop must be first be summoned to trial by bishops, and if he does not obey, he must be summoned again through two bishops who are sent to bring him, and then a third time through two bishops, and only when he does not appear the third time will the Council pronounce its decisions about him. In the case of Archbishop Andrew, he was not only not invited to a trial, but the sentence against him was passed, not by a Council, but by a single bishop like himself.

For similar reasons, his bans on Catacomb bishops in later years were also invalid.

Archbishop Andrew wrote: “This Sergius, knowing that I was in Ufa, wrote to my flock a letter, filled with slander against me, as if I had fallen away from Orthodoxy, as if I by the second rite had united myself to the beglopopovtsi, etc. I had no difficulty in proving that this was a lie and that the deputy of the locum tenens was simply a liar!…

“And so Metropolitan Sergius slandered me, travelling along this well-trodden path of slander and lies. But in Ufa amidst the ‘Niconians’ there were some thinking people and they did not believe Sergius’ slander, as they did not believe Peter’s. Moreover, two things took place which served to help me personally and help the Church in general.

“At that time I had two vicar-bishops with me – Anthony [Milovidov, of Ust-Katavsky] and Pitirim [of Nizhegorod, later Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin)]. Both of them wanted to check out everything that related to me in the matter of the reunion with Old Ritualism. Anthony set off to check things out in Moscow, obtained the trust of people in the chancellery of the Patriarchal Synod and personally got into the Synodal archive, so as to study the documents relating to me.

“You can imagine his surprise when in the spring of 1927 he became convinced that there were absolutely no documents about me in the Synodal archives, neither about my ‘departure into schism’, nor about my ‘ban’, etc. He asked in the Synod what this meant, and received the exceptionally characteristic reply: ‘Metropolitan Peter was probably only wanting to frighten Bishop Andrew’!…

“Bishop Pitirim, a 70-year-old monk who used to be on Old Athos, a clever man, although unlettered, went not to the sergianist Synod, which he did not recognize, but to Yaroslavl to Metropolitan Agathangelus, so as to tell him everything concerning Church life in Ufa in detail and to hear his opinion. Metropolitan Agathangel heard Bishop Pitirim out very attentively for several hours (two days) and told my vicar-bishop Pitirim (whom I had consecrated to the episcopate during my first exile in Tedzhent in June, 1925), that he should not be upset, that my ecclesiastical behaviour was irreproachable and that only in the interests of ecclesiastical peace he, Metropolitan Agathangel, advised me not to carry out any hierarchical consecrations but in the interests of the enlightenment of the flock in Ufa and other faithful sons of the Church, he, Metropolitan Agathangel, advised me to present my whole ‘case’ before the judgement of the nearest – at least three – bishops.

“’But this is only my advice, and it will be clearer how to act on the spot,” said Metropolitan Agathangel to Bishop Pitirim.

“Bishop Pitirim, on returning to Ufa, told me about all this, and Bishop Habbakuk of Old Ufa decided immediately to carry out the advice of Metropolitan Agathangel and on February 3, 1927 he invited Bishop Pitirim and Anthony to a convention in Ufa, while he asked me for all the materials that would explain my ecclesiastical behaviour.

“On February 3, 1927 these three bishops issued under their signatures an ‘Act with regard to the Affair of Archbishop Andrew’, in which they laid out the circumstances of the affair and came to the conclusion that I had not ‘departed’ anywhere, and that Metropolitan Sergius’ slander was in essence a light-minded and shameful intrusion into a holy affair.”

From October 3-6, 1927 a diocesan Congress took place in Ufa at which the “Act” was approved, Archbishop Andrew vindicated “as their true Ufa archpastor" and Metropolitan Sergius accused of lying. Vladyka Andrew's own view of his episcopal authority is contained in his reply to the Address of the clergy-lay assembly of March 26, 1926: "I remain a bishop for those who recognize me as their bishop, who fed me for the six years I was in prison, and who need me. I don't impose my episcopate on anyone."

However, Archbishop Andrew’s relations with the Old Ritualists did not end there. When Vladyka was released from prison in 1931, he began to visit the Rogozhskoe cemetery again, reasoning “that I am for them not a stranger, but their own, and I am for them not a hostile and harmful ‘Niconian’, but a true bishop of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”. It seems that he then entered into communion with Archbishop Meletius (Kartushin) of Moscow, the first-hierarch of the Belokrinitsky hierarchy, and together with him consecrated a secret bishop, Basil Guslinsky. Then he was again exiled. During this period, on April 1, 1932, priests of the Belokrinitsky hierarchy sent him the Holy Gifts and an omophorion. Archbishop Andrew now considered himself to be in full communion with Archbishop Meletius “in the holy ecclesiastical dogmas, and in prayer, and in ecclesiastical discipline (that is, in the holy rites)”. At the same time, he rejected the idea that he had “transferred” to the Belokrinitsky hierarchy, and insisted on remaining Bishop of Ufa, retaining “full freedom of Church action, arousing the suspicions of nobody”. Archbishop Meletius appears to have accepted this condition.

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Old Ritualists used the good intentions of the Orthodox bishop and future hieromartyr to deceive him. He considered that, as a result of his actions, “the schism, as a schism, has ideologically speaking come to an end”. But he was tricked by the beglopopovtsi, who rejected both him and the bishop he had consecrated for them, Clement. There was not then, and has not been since then, any union between the Orthodox Church and the Old Ritualists of the Belokrinitsky hierarchy. Nor can there be without the repentance of the latter, because, apart from the fact that the Belokrinitsky hierarchy has no apostolic succession, it, as the “Andrewites” themselves admit, followed the sergianists in becoming a tool of Soviet propaganda.

18. NOT BOWING THE KNEE TO BAAL

Although the True Orthodox laity of the Church of Greece with their few priests were essentially alone in openly opposing the calendar change, there were still some who had not "bowed the knee to Baal" in "the king's palace" – the hierarchy headed by Chrysostom Papadopoulos. Thus Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina never accepted it, while Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias protested against the introduction of the new calendar and held it in abeyance in his diocese until February 15, 1928.[205] Others accepted it, but continued to agitate for its removal.

Thus "on July 2, 1929, in the presence of forty-four metropolitans, [Archbishop] Chrysostom suddenly demanded the immediate signature of the hierarchs present to a report he had prepared approving the calendar change and condemning those who stayed with the old. This satanic plan of Chrysostom's was opposed by the metropolitans of Kassandreia, Maronia, Ioannina, Druinopolis, Florina, Demetrias, Samos and Khalkis. When the archbishop insisted, thirteen hierarchs left, while of the fifty-one who remained twenty-seven against four signed Chrysostom's report."[206]

Indeed, it was the hope that the State Church would eventually return to the Julian Calendar, that persuaded those bishops who later joined the True Orthodox to stay where they were for the time being. It was under their influence that in 1934 the State Church of Greece condemned Freemasonry as a pagan religion, and excommunicated Freemasons.

Bishop Ephraim writes that at a "Pre-Council" held at the monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos in 1930, "the representatives of the Serbian and Polish Churches (the Churches of Russia, Georgia, and Bulgaria were not represented at the council; Russia and Georgia were not present because, at the time, they were weathering the third wave of persecutions under Stalin, Bulgaria was not present because the 'Bulgarian schism' was still in effect) asked for a separate chapel. When the Greeks insisted that they all celebrate together the Slavs refused, excusing themselves by saying that the language was different, as well as the typicon, and that there would be confusion. The Greeks kept insisting and the Slavs kept refusing, and in fact, to the end of the council, the two did not concelebrate, and it became clear that the Slavs considered the calendar issue important enough at the time to separate themselves from the Greeks. When they said that their typicon was different, the calendar obviously weighed heavily as a part of that difference… In fact the Serbian Church even supported the Old Calendarist movement in Greece by sending them Chrism across the border secretly."[207]

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[205] George Lardas, "The Old Calendar Movement in the Greek Church: An Historical Survey", B.Th. Thesis, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1983, p. 12.

[206] Monk Anthony Georgantas, *Atheologites "Theologies" Atheologitou "Theologou"* (Atheist 'Theologies' of an Atheist 'Theologian'), Gortynia: Monastery of St. Nikodemos, 1992, pp. 7-8.

[207] Monk (now Metropolitan) Ephraim, *Letter on the Calendar issue*, op. cit. During this council Bishop

In 1929 Metropolitan Innocent of Peking wrote an open letter on the calendar question in which he said: "In the Church of Christ there is nothing of little value, nothing unimportant, for in every custom there is incarnate the Spirit of God, by Whom the Church lives and breathes. Does not everyone who dares to rise up against the customs and laws of the Church, which are based on sacred Tradition and Scripture, rise up against the Spirit of God and thereby show to all who have eyes to see of what spirit he is? Worthily and rightly does the Holy Church consign such people to anathema."[208]

In Greece, the number of True Orthodox parishes multiplied - 800 were founded in the years 1926-30 alone. And, helped by a parliamentary decree of 1931 granting freedom of worship to the Old Calendarists, the numbers of the faithful had swelled to over 200,000 by October, 1934.

On August 8, 1934 the True Orthodox Christians declared the official church to be schismatic. For, as Nicetas Anagnostopoulos wrote, the Greek Church had "infringed on the dogma of the spiritual unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, for which the Divine Founder had prayed, because it separated itself in the simultaneous celebration of the feasts and observance of the fasts from the other Orthodox Churches and the Orthodox world, 8/10ths of which follows the Old Calendar (the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Holy Mountain, Russia, Serbia and others).

"In Divine worship it has divided the pious Greek people into two worshipping camps, and has divided families and introduced the simultaneous feasts of Orthodox and heretics (Catholics, Protestants and others) as well as confusion and disorder into the divine Orthodox Worship handed down by the Fathers.

"It has transferred the immovable religious feasts and the great fasts, handed down from ages past, of Christmas, the Mother of God and the Holy Apostles, reducing the fast of the Apostles until it disappears when it coincides with the feast of All Saints; and has removed the readings from the Gospel and Apostle from the Sunday cycle.

"From this it becomes evident that the Calendar is not an astronomical question, as the innovators of the Church of Greece claim in their defence, but quite clearly a religious question, given that it is indissolubly bound up with the worshipping, and in general

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Nicholas (Velimirovich) of Ochrid vehemently defended the Orthodox Calendar, declaring that the1923 Congress which approved the new calendar had created a schism. "Does the present assembly," he said, "have any relation to the Pan-Orthodox Congress of Constantinople, from which the anomalies known to us all proceeded? The Church of Serbia was stunned when she saw the decisions of that Congress put into practice." (Monk Paul, *Neoimerologitismos Oikoumenismos* (Newcalendarism Ecumenism), Athens, 1982, p. 78)

[208] St. Elijah skete, Mount Athos, *Uchenie Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi o Sviashchennom Predanii i otnoshenie ee k novomu stiliu* (The Teaching of the Orthodox Church on Holy Tradition and its Relation to the New Calendar), Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1989, p. 25.

with the religious life of the Orthodox Christian.

"Through the calendar innovation the new calendarist Church has transgressed, not only the perennial Ecclesiastical Tradition of the Patristic and Orthodox Calendar, and not only the above-mentioned Apostolic command [II Thessalonians 2.15; Galatians 1.8-9] and the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council concerning the anathematisation of those who violate the Sacred Tradition ["If anyone violates any ecclesiastical tradition, written or unwritten, let him be anathema"], but also the decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Patriarchal Councils of the years 1583, 1587 and 1593 under the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II and of 1848 under the Ecumenical Patriarch Anthimus, which condemned and anathematized the Gregorian calendar.

"It has also transgressed the Sacred Canons which order the keeping and observance of the Sacred Traditions, which are: a) the Third of the Council of Carthage, b) the Twenty-First of the Council of Gangra, and c) the Ninety-First and Ninety-Second of St. Basil the Great, as well as the Forty-Seventh canon of the Council of Laodicea, which forbids the concelebration with heretics, which is what the Latins and the Protestants are, and the First of the Seventh Ecumenical Council concerning the steadfast observance of the complete array of the divine Canons."[209]

Nor did the new calendarists lack direct warnings from the Heavenly Church that the path they had embarked on was false. One such warning was given to the new calendarist Bishop Arsenius of Larissa on December 12/25, 1934, the feast of St. Spyridon according to the Old Calendar, but Christmas according to the new calendar.

"In the morning the bishop went by car to celebrate the Liturgy in his holy church. When he arrived there, he saw a humble, aged, gracious Bishop with a panagia on his breast. Arsenius said to him: 'Brother, come, let's proclaim the joyful letters of Christmas and then I will give you hospitality.'

"The humble Bishop replied: 'You must not proclaim those letters but mine, St. Spyridon's!' Then Arsenius got angry and said: 'I'm inviting you and you're despising me. Go away then.'

"Arsenius went into the church, venerated the icons and sat in his throne. When the time for the katavasias came, he sang the first katavasia, and then told the choir to sing the second. Arsenius began to say the third, but suddenly felt anxious and unwell. He motioned to the choir to continue and went into the altar, where they asked him: 'What's the matter, master?' He replied: 'I don't feel well.'

"When Arsenius' indisposition increased, they carried him to his house, where his condition worsened, and the next day he died. He had been punished by God for his impious disobedience to St. Spyridon. This miracle is known by the older Orthodox faithful of Larissa."[210]

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[209] *I Phoni tis Orthodoxias* (The Voice of Orthodoxy), № 844, November-December, 1991, pp. 26-27.

During this early period of the struggle against the new calendar, many people sympathized with the True Orthodox but did not join them because they did not yet have bishops. Others continued to worship according to the Orthodox Calendar without openly breaking communion with the new calendarists.

Among the latter was Fr. Nicholas Planas of Athens. Fr. Nicholas was the priest who was called to conduct a service of Holy Water to bless the "Society of the Orthodox", which effectively marked the beginning of the Old Calendarist struggle. At that service he said: "Whatever has been done uncanonically cannot stand – it will fall."

Once "he wanted to serve according to the traditional Calendar on the feast of the Prophet Elisseus [Elisha]. But since he feared that obstacles might arise, he agreed with his assistant priest the night before to go and serve at Saint Spyridon's in Mantouka. In the morning his chantress went to Saint Spyridon's and waited for him. Time passed and it looked as though the priest was not going to come to serve. She despaired. She supposed that something serious had happened to him, and that was why he hadn't come. She left and went to Prophet Elisseus' (because the 'information center' was there), to ask what had happened to the priest, and there, she saw him in the church preparing to celebrate the Liturgy! She chided him for breaking the agreement which they had made, and asked furthermore why he was not afraid, but came there in the center, right in the midst of the seething persecution. He said to her, 'Don't scold me, because this morning I saw the Prophet and he told me to come here to serve and not to fear anything, because he will watch over me.' His helper was left with her argument unfinished! 'But, how did you see him?' she asked him. He told her, 'I got up this morning and got ready for Saint Spyridon's. I was sitting in an armchair while they brought me a carriage. At that moment I saw Prophet Elisseus before me, and he told me to go to his church to celebrate the Liturgy!'…

"Another example similar to that of Papa-Nicholas is that of the priestmonk Jerome of Aegina, who followed the same path. Shortly after his ordination to the priesthood, a year or so before the calendar change, Fr. Jerome ceased from serving because of a vision that was granted him during the Liturgy. According to some accounts this occurred within forty days of his ordination. He continued to preach, however, at a hospital chapel where he lived, and which he himself had built there on the island of Aegina. Although this chapel officially was under the new calendar diocese of Aegina, Fr. Jerome always celebrated the feast days according to the traditional ecclesiastical calendar…

"Although he himself did not serve as a priest, nevertheless, because of his saintliness and his popularity among the people and because of the obvious gifts of the Holy Spirit which he possessed, he had great influence among the faithful who looked to him for direction and guidance. This came to the ears of Procopius, the Bishop of Hydra and Aegina. As a result, the bishop sent word to Fr. Jerome that he was going to come and impose on him to concelebrate with him. Up to this time, Fr. Jerome had sought to remain faithful to the Church's tradition and to his conscience without making an issue of it publicly or in street demonstrations. He saw, however, that the bishop was determined to create an issue now and force him into communion with him. As a result, Fr. Jerome sent the bishop a short note and resigned from the diocese, saying among other things: 'I ask you to accept my resignation from the Hospital, because from 1924 and thence, my longing, as well as my zeal, has been for the Orthodox Church and Faith. From my childhood I revered Her, and dedicated all my life to Her, in obedience to the traditions of the Godbearing Fathers. I confess and proclaim the calendar of the Fathers to be the correct one, even as You Yourself acknowledge…'"[211]

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[210] *I Agia Skepe* (The Holy Protection), № 122, October-December, 1991, p. 109.

An especially active role in the struggle was played by Hieromonk Matthew (Karpathakis), who in 1927, in response to a Divine vision, founded the women's Monastery of the Mother of God at Keratea, Attica, which soon became the largest monastery in Greece.[212]

In 1934 he wrote: "For every Christian there is nothing more honourable in this fleeting life than devout faith in the Master of all things, our Lord Jesus Christ. For what else can save the soul from death, that is, from the condemnation of eternal punishment, than this faultless Orthodox Christian Faith of ours, about which the Lord speaks clearly, saying: 'He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned' (Mark 16.16). This Faith was compared by the Lord to a valuable treasure which a man found hidden in a field and to buy which he sold all his possessions (Matthew 13.13).

"Therefore the blessed Apostle Jude exhorts everyone 'to contend for the Faith which was once for all delivered to the saints' (Catholic epistle, v. 3). And the divine Apostle made such an exhortation because there were appearing at that time men of deceit, the vessels of Satan, guileful workers, who sow tares in the field of the Lord, and who attempt to overturn the holy Faith in Christ. Concerning the men of impiety and perdition, the holy Apostle went on to write: 'For admission has been secretly gained by some who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly persons who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.' Because of these innovators and despisers of the Faith in the Holy Church of God which has been handed down to us, the Apostle of the Gentiles and Walker in heavenly places Paul hurled a terrible anathema, saying: 'If any one preaches to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed' (Galatians 1.9).

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[211] Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, *Papa-Nicholas Planas*, pp. 54-55, 108-110.

[212] Bishop Andrew of Patras, *Matthaios* (Matthew), Athens, 1963, pp. 50-66.

"Therefore our Lord in the Holy Gospel cries to all His faithful servants: 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits… Take heed that no one leads you astray… And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.' (Matthew 7.15,16, 24.4, 11)

"Against these innovating false-bishops and their followers the synodical decrees of the Church through the Most Holy Patriarchs declare that 'whoever has wished to add or take away one iota – let him be seven times anathema'…

"Thus with what great attention should every Orthodox Christian care for the valuable treasures of the Faith, so as to keep it undefiled, as the divine Apostles and Godbearing Fathers handed it down to us, and that he should struggle to preserve the state which is fitting for Christians of penitence, the fear of God, good works; for we live in an age in which, as the Evangelist John says, so many antichrists have appeared. He writes: 'Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.' (I John 2.18-19)

"… Those who govern the Church of Greece today have, together with the clergy who follow them, persisted in error, kakodoxy, schism, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the heresy of the Papist calendar! And they have led the people into error and become 'heresiarch' hierarchs according to the divine Fathers!

"… What great wealth of the grace of God is brought into the soul of the Christian by a little patience in afflictions! Although the holy martyrs, confessors and righteous ones passed their lives in persecutions and afflictions, nevertheless they endured and triumphed over this world which 'lies in evil' and found the unfading glory of the Kingdom of the Heavens, because they hoped in the Lord. Our Fathers hoped and were not ashamed, for the unlying mouth of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ confirmed: 'Behold, I am with you all the days of your life until the end of the age.' (Matthew 28.20) That is why the Church of Christ, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, although furiously persecuted by the Jews, the idolaters, the pseudo-wise, the atheist heretics and in general by the organs of the devil, emerged always victorious and resplendent. 'In truth nothing is stronger than the Church'; for Her Founder and Head is the God Who became man for our sakes, He Who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit is worshipped and glorified in heaven and on earth, He Who is blessed to the ages. As every Christian can see, Orthodoxy is passing through a terrible winter. Piety is persecuted, virtue is derided, Church tradition is scorned. It is frightful that Shepherds of the Church should turn into Her persecutors.

"St. Basil the Great once wrote: 'The one crime that is severely avenged is the strict keeping of the patristic traditions… No white hair is venerable to the judges of injustice, no pious asceticism, no state according to the Gospel from youth to old age… To our grief we see our feasts upturned, our houses of prayer closed, our altars of spiritual worship unused.' All this has now come upon us. Many and clearly to be seen by all are the great evils that the anticanonical renovationists introduced into the menologion and calendar of the Orthodox Church. Schisms, divisions, the overthrow of good order and complete confusion, violation of the most ancient laws of the Church, a great scandal for the conscience of the faithful were the consequences, though anathemas on those who violate 'any ecclesiastical tradition, whether written or unwritten' had been sounded by the Holy Ecumenical Councils. On the basis of the apostolic maxim, 'Obey those who have the rule over you and submit to them' (Hebrews. 13.7), the Shepherds of the Church who support this anticanonical innovation expect absolute obedience from the fullness of the Church. But how can the true children of the Church obey those who at the same moment disobey the holy Fathers, of whom the prophet says: 'The Lord chose them to love them', and do not venerate the Church's established order that has been handed down and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, while the Lord says concerning them: 'He who hears you hears Me, and he who despises you despises Me. And he who despises Me despises Him Who sent Me'? How can pious Christians shut their ears to the voices and work of such great Saints of God, and so be deprived of the praise and blessing of the Holy Trinity, which we hear in the mouth of the Apostle Paul himself: 'I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you' (I Corinthians 11.2); thereby receiving diverse and strange teachings 'according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ' (Colossians 2.8), inventions of men in which there lurks a special danger for the soul? The faithful children of the Church, with fear of God in regard to the commandment of the Holy Spirit: 'Stand firm and hold to the traditions' (II Thessalonians 2.15), and in conformity with the other commandment: 'Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it' (II Timothy. 3.14), have a reverent and God-pleasing answer to give to the unproved claims of today's innovating shepherds with regard to obedience: 'We must obey God rather than men' (Acts 5.29)."[213]

On August 6/19, Fr. Matthew and a group of other hieromonks and laymen gave an interesting "political" interpretation to the calendar question, laying special emphasis on the role of *the State* in imposing the innovations on the Church. The Greek "Mother Church" was accused of becoming a department of the State in a manner very similar to the accusations of Sergianism levelled by the Catacomb Christians against the official Russian Church. This again demonstrates the close kinship between the struggles of the True Orthodox Christians in Russia and Greece:

"1. Although, in accordance with the fundamental dogma of the Orthodox Church, she, as having as her source a Divine establishment [sustasis], must be a completely independent organism ('Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's' (Mark 12.17) and 'My Kingdom is not of this world' (John 18.36)), which by (Divine) right executes the spiritual power given to her by the Lord, her Founder – that is, teaching, ritual and pastoral authority (law-giving, judicial and administrative, including the administration of church property), - her part in Greece has been transformed from an independent institution of Christ into a state department, having her origin from the State and receiving her orders from it in every action.

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[213] Hieromonk Matthew (Karpathakes) (later Bishop of Bresthena), preface to the third edition of *Theion Prosevkhytarion* (Divine Prayer Book), Athens, 1934.

"2. Following this reconstruction, the bishops, having cast aside the power to govern church matters given to them by their ordination as being a vexatious [okhliron] burden, have allowed themselves to be replaced in the execution of this authority by Parliament, that is, a Babylonian affair composed of laymen and, which is worst of all, not always Orthodox (Papists, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Masons, atheists).

"3. They have abolished the fundamental principle proceeding from the New Testament, tradition and the sacred canons, in accordance with which bishops are elected exclusively at councils in the Holy Spirit, while today in essence and form they are elected by the State as its pure servants…

"4. They have abolished the fundamental understanding of the unity of the Church in the regulation of general questions at general Councils gathered together and taking decisions in the Holy Spirit, which they have done in the case of the calendar question, introducing the Catholic calendar into the Church, by which they have torn apart the unity of the Church, which they want to offer up as a prisoner to the propaganda of heterodox churches, in spite of the fact that there is not one reason for cooperating with the change from the patristic calendar to the Frankish calendar. For if they had decided for purely scientific reasons to accept the Grigorian calendar, which, in their opinion, is scientifically correct, the results of scientific investigations clearly show that it was necessary to add, not 13, but 16 days, as the introduction of the Catholic calendar into the Church requires. Consequently, it is completely clear that the aim of those who have introduced the Catholic calendar was to serve the propaganda of heterodox churches….

"8… Insofar as these and other innovations constitute a complete change in the teaching of the Orthodox Church, and pure Protestantism, which is inadmissible for our Orthodox conscience, we have decided: to reject this Orthodox Church, which is considered official, as schismatic, and remain faithful to the true principles of our Mother Orthodox Church, in theory and practice, and to concern ourselves to find canonical hierarchs, and when they have numbered three, to hand over to them the leadership of the Church."[214]

Here the official Church is completely rejected in what came to be known as the "Matthewite" ecclesiology (even if, at the beginning of the document the State Church of Greece is called "part" of "the Orthodox Mother Church").

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[214] Quoted by Fr. Roman Pavlov.

19. THE RETURN OF THE THREE BISHOPS

But this posed a serious problem. Suppose some Greek new calendarist bishops repented and returned to the Old Calendar, could they be considered to be bishops? After all, according to the "Matthewite" ecclesiology, in accepting the new calendar (under political pressure), they became schismatics. But schismatics do not have the grace of sacraments, nor the grace of the priesthood. Moreover, a movement composed of priests and laity only could not confer that grace on them…

Moreover, for complete consistency, why should the cut-off point be considered to be the introduction of the new calendar in 1924? Why not the first official proclamation of the heresy of ecumenism in 1920? But in that case the Ecumenical Patriarchate must have lost grace as early as 1920…

These questions did not, it would seem, occupy the minds of the "Matthewites" at this stage. But the time was coming when the whole movement would have to address them. And the differing answers given would tear the movement apart…

Now the True Orthodox Christians both in Greece and in Romania conducted the first phase of their struggle against the innovating State Churches without bishops. This is not to say that there were not bishops who supported them, but they were outside Greece and Romania. Thus Bishop Nicholas (Velimirovich) supported the Greek Old Calendarists from Serbia. Again, Metropolitan Anastasy of Kishinev supported the Romanian Old Calendarists from Jerusalem. In 1925 he wrote to Protopriest Vladimir Polyakov saying that he still considered himself head of the Bessarabian Church and was waiting for the opportunity to return there. And in 1930 he concelebrated with Fr. Glycherie in Jerusalem.[215]

But in Greece and Romania there were no bishops of the Old Calendar. This was a severe handicap, for while it is better to have no bishop than a heretical or schismatic one, the absence of bishops endangers the long-term survival of a Church for the simple reason that without a bishop it is impossible to ordain priests. Moreover, those in the camp of the innovators who secretly sympathize with the confessors are less likely to cross over to the latter if they have no bishops.

On October 11, 1934 Geroge Paraschos and Basil Stamatoulis, the President and Secretary General respectively of the Community of Genuine Orthodox Christians, appealed to ROCOR President Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky to consecrate bishops for them and accept them under his omophorion. But nothing came of their appeal.[216] However, it may be doubted whether Metropolitan Anthony was favourable to their petition - as we have seen, in 1926 he was against breaking all ties with the new calendarists until they had been condemned at an Ecumenical Council.[217]

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[215] Glazkov, op. cit., p. 55.

[216] Stavros Karamitsos, *I Agonia en to kipo Gethsimani* (The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane), Athens, 1999, pp. 162-164; Lardas, op. cit., p. 17.

But pressure for a return to the Julian Calendar continued to build up within the State Church; and in May, 1935 eleven bishops decided to return to the Julian calendar. However, pressure was exerted on them, and eight withdrew at the last moment. This left three: Metropolitan Germanus of Demetrias, the retired Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina (who had already distinguished himself in the early 1920s by refusing to recognize the election of Meletius Metaxakis) and Metropolitan Chrysostom of Zakynthos, who, according to one source, was accepted by the first two by the laying-on of hands, since he had been consecrated after the calendar change.[218] The three bishops did not make a public confession of repentance, saying that they had been trying to work for the restoration of the Julian calendar from within the State Church. They were accepted through their public confession of faith.[219]

On May 25, 1935, the Community of the Genuine Orthodox Christians invited the three metropolitans to break communion with the State Church and take up the leadership of the True Church. They agreed, and on Sunday, May 13/26, in the Community's little church of the Dormition at Colonus, Athens, and in the presence of 25,000 faithful, they formally announced their adherence to the True Orthodox Church – that is, the Church that followed the patristic calendar. Metropolitan Germanus was elected president of the new Synod. This joyful event was the people's reward for their steadfast confession of the Faith and the necessary condition for the further success of the sacred struggle of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece.

The three metropolitans then issued an encyclical in which they declared, among other things: "Those who now administer the Church of Greece have divided the unity of Orthodoxy through the calendar innovation, and have split the Greek Orthodox People into two opposing calendar parts. They have not only violated an Ecclesiastical Tradition which was consecrated by the Seven Ecumenical Councils and sanctioned by the age-old practice of the Eastern Orthodox Church, but have also touched the Dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Therefore those who now administer the Greek Church have, by their unilateral, anticanonical and unthinking introduction of the Gregorian calendar, cut themselves off completely from the trunk of Orthodoxy, and have declared themselves to be in essence schismatics in relation to the Orthodox Churches which stand on the foundation of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the Orthodox laws and Traditions, the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Serbia, Poland, the Holy Mountain and the God-trodden Mountain of Sinai, etc.

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[217] Psarev, op. cit., p 9.

[218] Holy Transfiguration Monastery, *The Struggle against Ecumenism*, Boston, 1998, p. 46. However, it should be emphasised that this cheirothesia is not mentioned in any of the early sources, and is not confirmed by contemporary True Orthodox sources.

[219] Bishop Photius of Marathon, private communication, March 5, 2008.

"That this is so was confirmed by the Commission made up of the best jurists and theologian-professors of the National University which was appointed to study the calendar question, and one of whose members happened to be his Blessedness the Archbishop of Athens in his then capacity as professor of Church History in the National University.

"Let us see what was the opinion given by this Commission on the new calendar: 'Although all the Orthodox Churches are autocephalous in their internal administration, nevertheless, in that they are united to each other through the Dogmas and the Synodical decrees and Canons, none of them can separate itself off as an individual Orthodox Church and accept the new Church calendar without being considered Schismatic in relation to the others.'

"Since his Beatitude the Archbishop of Athens has by his own signature declared himself to be a Schismatic, what need do we have of witnesses to demonstrate that he and the hierarchs who think like him have become Schismatics, in that they have split the unity of Orthodoxy through the calendar innovation and divided the Ecclesiastical and ethnic soul of the Greek Orthodox People?"[220]

This very important document was confirmed as expressing the Faith of the Church in several subsequent Confessions (notably the "Florinite" Confessions of 1950, 1974 and 1991). It declares that the new calendarists were not only schismatics but also, by clear implication, heretics in that they "touched the Dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church". Equally importantly, it shows that the three metropolitans recognized those Local Orthodox Churches that were still using the Old Calendar but remained in communion with the new calendarists to be still Orthodox.[221]

On May 23, 24, 25 and 26 (old calendar), 1935, the three metropolitans consecrated four new bishops in the monastery of the Mother of God in Keratea: Germanus (Varykopoulos) of the Cyclades, Christopher (Hatzi) of Megara, Polycarp (Liosi) of Diauleia, and Matthew (Karpathakis) of Bresthena. For this, on May 29, all seven bishops were arrested; later they were tried and defrocked by the State Church.

On June 1 the believing people came out en masse in front of the cathedral in Athens. A struggle with the police took place, and blood was shed. On June 7, the minister of security warned the Old Calendarist bishops that they would be exiled the next day.

On June 8, as they were being sent into exile, the three metropolitans issued the following encyclical: "We recommend to all those who follow the Orthodox Calendar that they have no spiritual communion with the schismatic church of the schismatic ministers, from whom the grace of the All-Holy Spirit has fled, because they have violated the decisions of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council and the Pan-Orthodox Councils which condemned the Gregorian calendar. That the schismatic Church does not have Grace and the Holy Spirit is affirmed by St. Basil the Great, who says the following: 'Even if the schismatics have erred about things which are not Dogmas, since the head of the Church is Christ, according to the divine Apostle, from Whom all the members live and receive spiritual increase, they have torn themselves away from the harmony of the members of the Body and no longer are members [of that Body] or have the grace of the Holy Spirit. Therefore he who does not have it cannot transfer it to others.'"[222]

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[220] Metropolitan Calliopius (Giannakoulopoulos) of Pentapolis, *Ta Patria* (Fatherland Matters), volume 7, Piraeus, 1987, p. 43.

[221] See http://www.genuineorthodoxchurch.net/images/GOC1935DiangelmaBgrk.pdf.

By a "coincidence" rich in symbolical meaning, it was precisely at this time – June, 1935 – that the Turkish law banning Orthodox clergy from wearing cassocks came into effect. Although this regulation was strongly resented by Patriarch Photius, the lower clergy greeted it with delight, shouting: "Long live Ataturk!"[223] And indeed, deprived now of the inner vestment of grace, and governed by "human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2.8), it was only fitting that the Patriarchate should lose even the outer sign of its former glory.

Metropolitans Germanus and Chrysostom and Bishop Germanus were exiled to distant newcalendarist monasteries, while Bishop Matthew was allowed to stay confined in his monastery in Keratea on account of his poor health. The remaining three bishops repented, and were received back into the State Church in their existing orders.[224]

However, in October the three exiled bishops were freed before time by the government (the new prime-minister, George Kondyles, sympathized with the True Orthodox).

The four Old Calendarist bishops then formed a Sacred Synod of the Greek Old Calendarist Church with Metropolitan Germanus as president.

In December, 1935 Metropolitan Chrysostom set off for Jerusalem and Damascus in order to discuss the possibility of convening a Council to resolve the calendar question. The two Patriarchs received him kindly and promised to help towards this goal.

However, as he prepared to return to Greece, the Greek consul in Jerusalem, acting under orders from Athens, refused to stamp a visa into his passport. For several months Metropolitan Chrysostom languished in Jerusalem as a virtual prisoner of the Greek consul. But Divine Providence, through the intercessions of "the liberator of captives", St. George, found a way out for him.

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[222] Metropolitan Calliopius, op. cit., pp. 277-278.

[223] A. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918-1974*, Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1983, p. 200.

[224] Hieromonk (now Bisho) Nectarius (Yashunsky), *Kratkaia istoria sviaschennoj bor'by starostil'nikov Gretsii protiv vseeresi ekumenizma* (A Short History of the Sacred Struggle of the Old Calendarists of Greece against the Pan-Heresy of Ecumenism).

This miracle was recounted by Chrysostom himself as follows: "I was depressed by my captivity since I had no information about how the Sacred Struggle was going and did not know what would be the outcome of my arbitrary detention in Jerusalem.

"With this serious problem weighing on me, I went, the next day, which was April 23, to the Divine Liturgy. With pain and faith I called on St. George to help me:

"'Holy Great-Martyr of Christ George, you who are the liberator of captives and defender of the poor, perform your miracle and deliver me from this captivity.'

"That evening, when I was in my house and before going to bed, I heard a knock on the door of my house:

"'Come in.'

"Immediately the door opened and there entered a good-looking young man, who said:

"'You are free to leave. No-one will give you the news.'

"'Go and look at my passport.'

"The young men promptly left and, returning soon after, said:

"'Everything is ready.'"

The bishop was about to give the young man a tip when, to his amazement, he vanished. He pondered what this could mean. However, his heart was full of peace and joy.

The next day he again went to the church. On glancing at the icon of St. George, he remembered the previous day's incident and noticed that the face of the saint on the icon looked exactly like the young man he had seen. With great enthusiasm he chanted the troparion to the saint: "Liberator of captives and defender of the poor", and then turned to him as if to a close friend:

"St. George, I, too, am a prisoner. But since you promised that no-one would give me the news, I'm going. Protect me."

Immediately after church he went to the house where he was staying and said to the landlady:

"I'm going to Piraeus."

"But, your Grace, where will you go? Your passport doesn't have a visa."

"St. George will help me."

When he got to Haifa, from where the boats left for Piraeus, he began to worry again, because he did not know the language and had no-one he knew to talk to.

As he was setting foot in a boat, he saw a monk whom he did not know, who approached him, bowed and said to him in Greek:

"Your Grace, how can I be of service to you?"

"How can you be of service to me? I want to leave, but my passport has not had a visa stamped in it by the Greek consul."

The monk took the passport, went to a travel agency, and although the passport did not have the seal of the Greek consul, obtained a ticket.[225]

The two metropolitans continued to be harassed by the State Church. Thus in 1937 a magistrate's court tried Chrysostom on the charge of having served in the church of the Three Hierarchs in Thessalonica. He was declared innocent. However, further trials followed in 1938 and 1940[226], and in 1943 Metropolitan Germanus died in exile.

But the Lord also continued to give signs from heaven to His faithful. Thus the True Orthodox Christians of Crete were going to celebrate the feast of the Exaltation in a church on Mount Kophinas. "On the eve of the feast, which was a Sunday (13/9/1937), when it began to grow dark, the faithful were arriving in groups from the various villages in the area, some on foot, some riding on animals… The old men together with the priests Fr. Demetrius from Krousona and Fr. Charalampus from Kapetaniana were waiting for them at the little church of the Nativity of the Mother of God, which was on the foothills of Kophinas. That evening, above the peak of the Cross, there was a lot of mist and thick fog, and climbing was very difficult. The faithful numbered more than 500, and according to others – more than 1000.

"At ten o'clock a detachment of police arrived led by a sub-lieutenant. They justified their presence by saying that 'they came to maintain… order!' Of course, their motive was quite different. However, when they saw the numbers of the faithful they were forced to change their minds.

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[225] Elijah Angelopoulos, Dionysius Batistates, *Chrysostomos Kavourides*, Athens, 1981, pp. 21-25.
[226] The Zealots of the Holy Mountain, *Syntomos Istorike Perigraphe*, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

"At midnight the priests began to chant the Akathist to the Honoured Cross. In spite of the fog and the cold, strong wind, the faithful prayed on their knees, and they all together repeated the 'Rejoice, blessed wood' or the 'Alleluia'.

"At the end of the Rejoices the wind suddenly stopped blowing and the mist began to disperse. The peak of Kophinas and the little church of the Honoured Cross came clearly into view.

"Before they realized what was happening, the whole area was illumined by light and sweet peace spread everywhere. Then, with fear but also with ineffable joy, they saw a cross of light shining on the peak of Kophinas and casting its rays over the whole area. The night suddenly became day! Nothing could be heard except the 'Kyrie eleisons' and the mute weeping of the Faithful. None of the eyewitnesses could say how long the miracle lasted.

"Finally, after quite a long time, as it had appeared, so it gradually disappeared again… And again, as at the beginning, the wind began to blow and a thick fog covered the area.

"The faithful continued with renewed zeal and compunction to pray the whole night. The priests celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the little church of the All Holy.

"At dawn the Divine Liturgy came to an end, whereupon the whole crowd of the faithful began to move, returning to their villages and houses, discussing amongst themselves and the police the wonderful miracle of the divine appearance of the Honoured Cross…"[227]

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[227] Metropolitan Calliopius, *Ta Patria* (Fatherland Matters), vol. 6, Piraeus, 1984, pp. 67-74.

20. PERSECUTION IN ROMANIA

In 1935, the leader of the Romanian Old Calendarists, Hieromonk Glycherie, heard of the return of the three bishops to the Old Calendar in Greece. And so late in the autumn he "travelled again to Mount Athos, accompanied by Monk Ghimnazie, who knew Greek… Their purpose was to bring an Old Calendarist Hierarch to Romania to perform Ordinations, or to have Father Ghimnazie or any other Romanian living on Mount Athos Consecrated to serve the Church back home."[228]

However, when they "asked the Old Calendar Greek bishops to consecrate Fr. Ghimnazie to the episcopate, the bishops could do nothing without their first-hierarch, Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina, who, at the insistence of the newcalendarist Metropolitan of Athens, had been detained by the English authorities in Palestine...

"St. Glycherie set off for Yugoslavia. He visited the church of the Russian Church Abroad in Belgrade, where Metropolitan Anastasy was serving. Metropolitan Anastasy advised Fr. Glycherie to turn to Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) of the Russian Church Abroad, and ask him to go to Romania to order Old Calendar priests. Bishop Seraphim at that time was in Vienna. St. Glycherie set off there, but Vladyka Seraphim did not decide to go to Romania, knowing how dangerous it was."[229]

After returning to Romania, on September 1, 1936 Fr. Glycherie came to the consecration of a church in the village of Bukhalniţa-Neamţ. He was accompanied by 4000 peasants on 500 waggons. When the procession was passing through the town of Piatra Neamţ, the road was blocked by soldiers with machine guns. St. Glycherie and many other monks and laypeople were arrested. Many were killed. Glycherie was savagely beaten on the head with various clubs. Deacon David Bidascu was also beaten, and suffered from his wounds for the rest of his days.[230]

Metropolitan Cyprian writes: "Hieromonk Glycherie… was taken under guard to Bucharest and there condemned to death. He was, however, miraculously saved, in that the Theotokos appeared to the wife of the Minister of Justice and gave her an order to intercede with her husband on Father Glycherie' behalf. Her husband did not react in the manner of Pilate, but rather commuted Father Glycherie's death sentence and ordered him imprisoned in a distant monastery…

"[Patriarch Miron] ordered all of the churches of the True Orthodox Christians razed, and imprisoned any cleric or monastic who refused to submit to his authority. The monks and nuns were incarcerated in two monasteries, where they were treated with unheard of barbarity. Some of them, such as Hieromonk Pambo, founder of the

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[228] Bujor, op. cit., p. 98.

[229] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 52.

[230] 231 Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 57.

Monastery of Dobru (which was demolished and rebuilt three times), met with a martyr's end. During the destruction of the Monastery of Cucova, five lay people were thrown into the monastery well and drowned. By such tactics the Patriarch wished to rid himself of the Old Calendarist problem!"[231]

Like several Balkan countries, and indeed Europe as a whole, Romania during the 1930s was torn by the rivalry between the two totalitarian powers, Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. Romania was in a particularly vulnerable position because she shared a frontier with the Soviets, across which, in the event of a Soviet-German war, the Soviets would undoubtedly want to send their troops. The question was: should Romania allow it?

As is revealed in the Memoirs of Prince Michael Sturdza[232], on October 22, 1934 Göring, speaking in the name of Hitler, set forth the following proposal to the Romanian Ambassador in Berlin, Petrescu-Comnen: a guarantee of all Romania's frontiers, including those with Soviet Russia and Hungary and the complete rearmament with the most modern weapons of Romania's military forces. Germany did not ask Romania to abandon any of her alliances. The only thing she asked in exchange was a pledge to oppose any attempt of the Soviet troops to cross Romania's territory. Titulescu, Romania's pro-western Foreign Minister at the time, concealed Petrescu-Comnen's report, and the German proposals, though repeated several times before the outbreak of World War Two, continued to be rejected by Romanian statesman.

However, there was a strong movement in favour of a rapprochement with Germany within Romania. Because of its pro-fascist, anti-semitic and occasionally violent nature, this, the Legionnaire or Iron Guard movement has had a bad press generally in the West.[233] And there can be no doubt about its pro-fascism: documentary films show the

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[231] Metropolitan Cyprian, "The True Orthodox Christians of Romania", *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1982, vol. 18, № 1 (102). Over ten priests were killed or died in prison, including Fathers Pambo, Gideon and Theophanes. See Victor Boldewskul, "The Old Calendar Church of Romania", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 42, № 5, October-November, 1992, pp. 11-17. Metropolitan Blaise writes: "Take, for example, Fr. Euthymius – he was in a concentration camp for 3 years with Fr. Pambo, and he told us how they tortured him: they threw him into a stream and forced other prisoners to walk over him as over a bridge: he was at that time about 27 years old." (*Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 2(1479), 15/28 January, 1993)

[232] Sturdza, *The Suicide of Europe: Memoirs of Prince Michel Sturdza, Former Foreign Minister of Rumania,* Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1968.

[233] See, for example, Michael Burleigh's assessment: "Few European Fascist movements went so far as to proclaim that 'God is a Fascist!' or that 'the ultimate goal of the Nation must be resurrection in Christ!' Romania was the exception. Romanian Fascists wanted 'a Romania in delirium' and they largely got one. The Legion of the Archangel Michael was founded in 1927 in honour of the archangel, who had allegedly visited Corneliu Codreanu, its chief ideologist, while he was in prison. It was the only European Fascist movement with religion (in this case Romanian Orthodoxy) at its core. In 1930 the Legion was renamed the Iron Guard. While rivalling only the Nazis in the ferocity of their hatred of Jews, these Romanian Fascists were sui generis in their fusion of political militancy with Orthodox mysticism into a truly lethal whole. One of the Legion's intellectual luminaries, the world-renowned anthropologist Mircea Eliade, described the legionary ideal as 'a harsh Christian spirituality'. Its four commandments were 'belief in God; faith in our mission; love for one another; son'. The goal of a 'new moral man' may have been a totalitarian

Legionnaires making the fascist salute, and their leader, Corneliu Codreanu, declared on November 30, 1937: "Forty-eight hours after the victory of the Legionary Movement, Rumania will be allied to Rome and Berlin, thus entering the line of its historical world-mission: the defense of the Cross, of Christian Culture and Civilization."

Nevertheless, in view of its political and religious importance, and its brave resistance to Soviet influence in Romania, for which Codreanu and several other legionnaires paid with their lives, it will be worth citing more positive estimates of its significance.

"The Legionary Movement," writes Thomas Haas, "was founded on June 24, 1927, under the name of the Legion of the Archangel Michael, by one of the truly great men of our era. Corneliu Codreanu was born on September 13, 1899 in Husi, a town in northern Moldavia, where his father was a teacher at the local lycee. He attended the famous military school Manastirea Dealului and the Infantry Officer's school. The beginning of what was to be his career and mission can be dated from January 1918. After the Bolshevik takeover in Petrograd, the Russian troops which had been fighting alongside their Rumanian allies degenerated into no more than a collection of drinking, looting, raping rabble. During that fateful January, Codreanu organized a group of high school students to fight the Russian marauders, who were menacing the Moldavian city of Iasi. Shortly thereafter he organized the Guard of National Conscience from among the students and workers of Iasi.

"Codreanu reached what can be considered a point of no return in his tragic life, a life entirely dedicated to the battle for the moral purity and the welfare and the glory of his nation, in 1922 when he organized the Association of Christian Students. He and twenty-six students took a pledge of honor, in a religious ceremony, to continue for the rest of their lives the nationalist fight—a pledge to which many of them remained faithful even unto their deaths. In 1923 he founded the League of National Christian Defense (LANC, which polled 120,000 votes in the election of 1926). When Codreanu returned to Rumania in 1927 after a period of study at Grenoble University, LANC had disintegrated into a collection of feuding splinter groups. From the best of the earlier league, he organized the Legion of the Archangel Michael which came to be called the Legionary Movement. In 1930 a group of hard-core members formed an elite section within the Legion, called the Iron Guard. In time the Legion came to be known by the name of this elite group. Although the two are almost synonymous, the reader should keep in mind that they represent two different aspects of the Movement.

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commonplace, but the 'resurrection of the [Romanian] people in front of God's throne' was not routine in such circles. But then few European Fascists were induced into an elite called the Brotherhood of Christ by sipping from a communal cup of blood filled from slashes in their own arms, or went around with little bags of soil tied around their necks. Nor did they do frenzied dances after chopping opponents into hundreds of pieces. Not for nothing was the prison massacre of Iron Guard leaders – including the captain Codreanu himself – by supporters of King Carol II known to local wits as 'the Night of the Vampires'. Although the Romanian elites emasculated the Guard's leadership, much of their furious potential was at that elite's disposal…" (*Sacred Causes*, London: Harper Perennial, 2007, p. 270)

“The purpose of the Legionary Movement was the defense of the endangered nation and of all the spiritual and historic values which formed the texture of Rumania's national existence…

“We think it is fitting to quote the basic rules of the organization. These are contained in the Manual of Legionary Laws, written for the use of the head of each Legionary group.

“The Law of Discipline: [The] Legionary [must] be obedient; without discipline we will not win. Follow your chief for better or worse.

“The Law of Work: Do your daily work. Work with joy. Let the reward of your work be not any material profit, but the satisfaction that you have contributed something to the glory of the Legion and the greatness of your country.

“The Law of Silence: Talk little. Talk only when you must. Your eloquence is in deeds. Let others talk; you do.

“The Law of Education: You must become another man. A hero.

“The Law of Assistance: Help your brother in distress. Do not abandon him.

“The Law of Honor: Follow only the ways shown by honor. Fight. Never be a coward. Leave to others the ways of infamy. Better fall fighting the way of honor, than to conquer by infamy.”[234]

Another positive assessment is provided by Monk Moise: “After wandering off in different directions, Codreanu and other young people, troubled by the need to do something for their country, realized that what was needed to instigate a profound change in society was not so much a new party or a new political program – as they themselves had been tempted to believe – but rather education of a Christian and national character leading to moral renewal. ‘This country [wrote Codreanu] is perishing from lack of people, not from a lack of programs. This is our opinion. It is not programs that we must create, but people, new people… Therefore the cornerstone from which the Legion sets out is humankind, not political programs. The reform of people, not the reform of political programs. Therefore, the Legion of the Archangel Michael will rather be a school and army than a political party. The Romanian people, at this point in its history, do not need a great politician, as some mistakenly believe, but a great educator and leader to vanquish the powers of evil and shatter the ranks of evildoers. In order to do this, however, he must first overcome the evil in himself and in his brethren.’

“In order to form a Legionnaire elite, the best from among the youth were selected, beginning with those of high school age. This organization of young men was named

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[234] Haas, introduction to Sturdza, op. cit., pp. xvii-xix.

Frąția de Cruce (FDC), the *Brotherhood of the Cross.* Those targeted were screened according to certain criteria: faithfulness and attendance at church, good academic achievement, respectfulness toward others, love of country, honesty, etc. Candidates were not admitted to the FDC automatically but in accordance with certain requirements. It set out be an elite organization that would admit only the best.

"Those admitted found an atmosphere of love, seriousness, and enthusiasm highly suited to their spiritual growth. They received a primarily moral and spiritual education, along Christian lines; they were encouraged to participate in the sacraments of confession, to adhere to a prayer schedule, to fast, to avoid bodily sins, to be merciful, correct, punctual, sympathetic, ready to help others, obedient, and studious. Since work played an important role in Legionnaire training, work camps were organized in which, along with Legionnaires, *brothers of the cross* participated in the construction and repair of churches, schools, roads, bridges, levees, etc. They worked in an atmosphere of youthful enthusiasm, while the camps also provided an opportunity for the formation and strengthening of spiritual ties.

"Their meetings began with a prayer commemorating those who had died for the Legionnaire cause, followed by a reading from the New Testament. At every meeting, those present took turns introducing a theme having to do with faith, morality, national history, culture, etc. Legionnaire songs were sung and memorized; participants took turns reciting from Legionnaire writings, while the final portions of meetings were reserved for decision-making regarding new goodwill projects that needed to be undertaken such as help for someone in need, collection of assistance for the family of an arrested Legionnaire, or similar work for the benefit of their brethren.

"The young men who gathered together in the FDC made up a real family; they were taught to love one another and to help one another in time of need. The friendship that existed between them sprang from an impressive degree of love and sincerity. The most original part of the meetings was the moment of friendship or sincerity, a form of public 'confession' of all mistakes made since the last meeting. This did not replace the sacrament of confession – each of them also confessed to his spiritual father; rather, it was an expression of the trust and sincerity that united them. After they all confessed their mistakes, each of them reported what mistakes they'd noticed among the others who were present. Then each of them received a 'penance'…

"In addition to educational activity, the *brothers of the cross* participated in the political activity of the Legion through the distribution of leaflets and posters and through occasional involvement in electoral propaganda. They also participated in the collection of funds for imprisoned Legionnaires and their families…

"The moral-spiritual component of this education was interwoven with a national-heroic component. The accent was placed on love of country and on knowledge of history and well-known Romanians. There was pronounced consideration of historical struggles and national heroes, the Legionnaires identifying with these heroes and looking to them as models. The intention was to cultivate the heroic and soldierly qualities of these young men: courage, strength of will, steadfastness, a spirit of sacrifice, discipline, the ability to confront danger, etc.

"The Legionnaires' organization and discipline were of military inspiration, but this freely-assumed discipline did not have an air of dryness and barrack-like rigidity for those involved. The harshness was alleviated by their spiritual relationships and states of spirit. The conduct of a *brother of the cross*, like that of a Legionnaire, had to be dignified, firm, disciplined, and orderly, like that of a soldier…

"A very important trait for … the Legionnaire … was a sense of justice. While being obligated by their code of conduct not to do anything that would stain their sense of honor or that would prevent them from supporting any just cause, this very sense of honor also required them to react when anyone offended them. This kind of conduct is debatable from a Christian point of view, which advocates humility and requires that one turn the other cheek when struck. When the Legionnaire encountered Christianity in all its profundity in the Communist prisons, this concept of honor turned out to be a source of great difficulty for them, as they realized that the passion of pride can lie behind it…

"Because measures were taken against the Legion such that they were almost constantly persecuted, the education of the *brothers of the cross* did not follow its natural course. Forced to meet in secret, sheltered from the far-reaching sight of the authorities, without experienced guides, these young men were not always able to benefit from a solid spiritual education. Borne along primarily by enthusiasm and sincerity, they nevertheless lacked a profoundly Christian vision, which most of them would acquire in prison. The seeds sown by training in the Brotherhood of the Cross, despite their shortcomings, were significant [and] important, for the young men received a spiritual foundation based on Christian principles that was much more solid than any training offered in traditional, academic milieus. The Christian conduct they later displayed in prison found its source in these principles that formed their characters, principles which cultivated the virtues of steadfastness, solidarity, and a spirit of sacrifice, while many non-Legionnaires, as Steinhardt noted, lost their balance, humanity, and self-control."[235]

Perhaps the finest fruit of the Legionnaire movement was a group of martyrs who suffered in Tărgu-Ocna in the 1950s. Valeriu Gafencu was imprisoned by the communists precisely because of his training in the Legionnaire spirit. He was attracted to the religious rather than the political aspects of the movement, was opposed to its occasional violence and anti-semitism, and instilled in the quasi-monastic community that formed around him in the camp-hospital an Orthodox spirit of love and self-sacrifice. His group therefore represented Legionnairism purged of all dubious political elements and striving only to fulfil the commandments of God in the spirit of Orthodox Christianity.

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[235] Monk Moise, *The Saint of the Prisons*, Sibiu: Agnos, 2009, pp. 28-32, 32-34, 34-35, 36-37. For another positive assessment of the Legionnaire movement, see Alexander Ronnett and Faust Bradescu, "The Legionary Movement in Romania", http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v07/v07p193_Ronnett.html.

The Legionnaires did not separate from the official, new calendar church. Nevertheless, in their own way they represented a separation from the spiritual deadness of that church, whose head, Patriarch Miron became prime minister in the cabinet of the "royal dictatorship" of King Charles II in February, 1938. Immediately there began a severe persecution of the Legionnaires. In April Codreanu was arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison. In November he was killed…

Although the Romanian True Orthodox Church, unlike the Legionnaire movement, was a purely spiritual organization, it is not surprising that its leaders should have been put into the same category. Thus in 1938 the authorities now decided to accuse the True Orthodox leader Fr. Glycherie of being an Iron Guard. "After Father Glicherie was arrested in 1936," writes Constantin Bujor, "all means of intimidation were employed to shatter his nervous system. He was incarcerated for more than two years in a variety of prisons, being transferred from one jail to another; Bucharest, Iezeru, Rāmnicu Vālcea, Iezeru, Rāmnicu Vālcea, Craiova, Bucharest, Iaşi, Iezeru, and Piatra Niamţ. The accusation of being an Old Calendarist could not carry too long a sentence, and Father Glicherie was thus finally set at liberty in 1938 – much to the chagrin of those who had gone to such great lengths to have him arrested. So, once again, they fabricated false charges, this time accusing him of more serious infractions in order to have him decisively condemned. Thus, Hieromonk Glicherie was falsely accused of being active in the Legionary Movement. Although Legionnaires were highly regarded and visible in Romanian political life at this time, the Monarch had dictatorially abolished all political parties. Ironically, Father Glicherie was also falsely accused at the same time of Communist or Bolshevik activity, because the Russian Orthodox Church followed the Julian Calendar. This, too, was a serious charge: the Communists were mortal enemies of Romania, and therefore, through guilt by association, the Old Calendarists were enemies of the State. Accusations of these kinds provoked a variety of reactions and even frightened many people, who came to believe that the Old Calendarists posed a danger to society. To discourage supporters of the Old Calendar Church, appropriate punishments were levied. Plenty of 'witnesses', denunciations, and contrived 'facts' could easily be produced; the elimination of inconvenient opponents by such methods was the order of the day. Thus, in 1938, Father Glicherie was arrested and sent to Miercurea Ciuc to a death camp for political prisoners. After nine months' imprisonment, he was scheduled for execution with a group of Legionnaires. Miraculously, at the very moment that he was to face the firing squad, he was saved by the government's unexpected amnesty of the camp's remaining detainees…"[236]

K.V. Glazkov writes that while Fr. Glycherie was in this camp "there came an order to divide all the prisoners into two parts and shoot one part and then the other. When the first group had been shot, Fr. Glycherie and several legionnaires in the second group prayed a thanksgiving moleben to the Lord God and the Mother of God for counting them worthy of death in the Orthodox faith. The Lord worked a miracle – suddenly there arrived a governmental order decreeing clemency."[237]

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[236] Bujor, op. cit., pp. 99-101.

"King Carol II's attempt to crush the Legionary movement, rather than weakening it, strengthened it more. Moreover, the king's grasp on power was slipping because of the corruption of his regime and its powerlessness to oppose the territorial losses to neighboring states in 1940 [Bessarabia, was occupied by the Red Army]. Carol was thus forced to accommodate the Legionnaires, who even gained positions in the government. The tables were finally turned on him when General (later Marshal) Ion Antonescu became President of the Council of Ministers and forged an alliance with the Iron Guard. On August 24/September 6, 1940, King Carol II was forced to abdicate in favour of the previous Monarch, his son Mihai; Antonescu dubbed himself Conducător Statului, 'Leader of the State' [a title used by the murdered Iron Guard leader Codreanu]; Horia Sima (1907-1993), Commander of the Iron Guard, became Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, and the National Legionary State of Romania was formally established. Antonescu's alliance with the Iron Guard was one of political expediency, however, not one of ideological conviction; its draconian methods and goals often clashed with his own personal authoritarian agendum. The Legionnaires thus betrayed Antonescu, staging a coup d'état in January of 1941, which, lacking support from the Third Reich of Germany, proved abortive. This enabled Antonescu, with the blessing of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945), to suppress the Iron Guard, thereby consolidating his power as military dictator of Romania."[238]

"With the outbreak of World War II in 1939," writes Metropolitan Cyprian, "Father Glycherie was set free and, along with his beloved co-struggler, Deacon David Bidascu, fled into the forest. There the two lived in indescribable deprivation and hardship, especially during the winter. In the midst of heavy snows, when their few secret supporters could not get frugal provisions to them, the Fathers were obliged to eat worms! However, Divine Providence protected them from their persecutors and, directed by that same Providence, the birds of the sky would erase traces of the Fathers' footprints in the snow by flying about and flapping their wings in the snow. And despite the harsh cold, not once did they light a fire, lest the smoke might betray their refuge. (The cold often approaches thirty degrees below zero during the winter in Romania.) Other ascetics were also hidden in the deserts, among them Father Damascene, Father Paisius, et al."[239]

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[237] Glazkov, "Istoricheskie prichiny nekotorykh sobitij v istorii Rumynskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi do II Mirovoj vojny" (The Historical Reasons for some Events in the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church before the Second World War), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), №№ 3-4, May-August, 2000, pp. 57-58.

[238] Bujor, op. cit., p. 101, translator's note.

[239] Metropolitan Cyprian, op. cit.

21. TWO HOLY HIEROMARTYRS

In May, 1932, Stalin declared an anti-religious five-year plan: by 1936 the last church was to be closed, and by 1937 the name of God would no longer be pronounced in the Soviet Union. By the beginning of 1933 half the churches in the land had been closed or destroyed.[240] But the census of 1937 established that two-thirds of the peasantry and one-third of the city-dwellers still maintained their faith in God. This impressive figure owed nothing to Sergius' pact with the State, which divided the faithful and gave the atheists a powerful weapon against them.

In 1933 Metropolitan Sergius stated officially that he "as the deputy of Metropolitan Peter, had not only the temporary authority of the First Hierarch but the Patriarchal Power as well". He also declared that Metropolitan Peter, the lawful First Hierarch, did not have the right "to interfere in the administration of the Church or even correct the mistakes of his deputy." As a result of this statement, Bishop Athanasius (Sakharov) of Kovrov broke communion with Sergius, as he stated in a letter to him on his return from exile in December, 1933.[241]

In April, 1934 Sergius' Synod gave him the title of Metropolitan of Kolomna, thereby making him in effect an "adulterer bishop"; for the true holder of the see, Metropolitan Peter, was still alive. In 1935 Metropolitan Peter returned to Moscow and met Metropolitan Sergius. The latter asked him to recognize the new construction of Church life and to agree to the convening of a Council. On his side, Metropolitan Peter demanded that Sergius return Church power to him. Sergius refused, and Peter returned to the camps. In August, 1936, the NKVD spread the rumour that Metropolitan Peter had died. The Sergianist Synod promptly – and completely uncanonically – passed a resolution transferring the rights and duties of the patriarchal locum tenency to Metropolitan Sergius.

In view of this further departure of Metropolitan Sergius from the holy canons, it may be asked what was the reaction of the leading hierarchs of the Catacomb Church – Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, the patriarchal locum tenens and de jure leader of the Church, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, her de facto leader, and Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, the first locum tenens appointed by Patriarch Tikhon and the favoured candidate of the Russian episcopate for the role of patriarch.

Metropolitan Peter's attitude was particularly important to ascertain in view of the fact that both the True Orthodox and the sergianists formally acknowledged him as the

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[240] Radzinsky, however, claims that by the end of 1930 "80 per cent of village churches were closed" (*Stalin*, New York: Doubleday, 1996, p. 249).

[241] *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1933, № 1, p. 3; Letter of Bishop Athanasius, May 9/22, 1955.

Church's first hierarch. Earlier, Bishop Damascene of Glukhov had claimed to have made contact with him through his cell-attendant, who reported that Metropolitan Peter expressed disapproval of Sergius' policies. Thus on January 22, 1928 he wrote to a certain N. "For a first-hierarch such an appeal [as Sergius' declaration] is *inadmissible.* Moreover, I don't understand why a Synod was formed from (as I can see from the signatures under the appeal) unreliable people. Thus, for example, Bishop Philip is a heretic… In this appeal a shadow is cast upon me and the patriarch, as if we had political relations with abroad, whereas the only relations were ecclesiastical. I do not belong to the irreconcilables, I allowed everything that could be allowed, and it was suggested to me in a more polite manner that I sign the appeal. I refused, for which I was exiled. I trusted Metropolitan Sergius, and I see that I was mistaken."

On September 17, 1929, the priest Gregory Seletsky wrote to Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd on behalf of Archbishop Demetrius (Lyubimov): "I am fulfilling the request of his Eminence Archbishop Demetrius and set out before you in written form that information which the exiled Bishop Damascene has communicated to me. He succeeded in making contact with Metropolitan Peter, and in sending him, via a trusted person, full information about everything that has been taking place in the Russian Church. Through this emissary Metropolitan Peter said the following to him: '1. You Bishops must yourselves remove Metropolitan Sergius. '2. I do not bless you to commemorate Metropolitan Sergius during Divine services…"[242]

In December, 1929 Metropolitan Peter wrote to Sergius: "Your Eminence, forgive me magnanimously if by the present letter I disturb the peace of your Eminence's soul. People inform me about the difficult circumstances that have formed for the Church in connection with the exceeding of the limits of the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to you. I am very sorry that you have not taken the trouble to initiate me into your plans for the administration of the Church. You know that I have not renounced the locum tenancy, and consequently, I have retained for myself the Higher Church Administration and the general leadership of Church life. At the same time I make bold to declare that your remit as deputy was only for the management of everyday affairs; you are only to preserve the status quo. I am profoundly convinced that without prior contact with me you will not make any responsible decision. I have not accorded you any constituent right as long as I retain the locum tenancy and as long as Metropolitan Cyril is alive and as long as Metropolitan Agathangelus was alive. Therefore I did not consider it necessary in my decree concerning the appointment of candidates for the deputyship to mention the limitation of their duties; I had no doubt that the deputy would not alter the established rights, but would only deputize, or represent, so to speak, the central organ through which the locum tenens could communicate with his flock. But the system of administration you have introduced not only excludes this: it also excludes the very need for the existence of the locum tenens. Such major steps cannot, of course, be approved by the consciousness of the Church. I did not admit any qualifications limiting the duties of the deputy, both from a feeling of deep reverence and trust for the appointed candidates, and first of all for you, having in mind at this point your wisdom. It is burdensome for me to number all the details of negative evaluations of your administration: the resounding protests and cries from believers, from hierarchs and laypeople. The picture of ecclesiastical division that has been painted is shocking. My duty and conscience do not allow me to remain indifferent to such a sorrowful phenomenon; they urge me to address your Eminence with a most insistent demand that you correct the mistake you have made, which has placed the Church in a humiliating position, and which has caused quarrels and divisions in her and a blackening of the reputation of her leaders. In the same way I ask you to suspend the other measures that have increased your prerogatives. Such a decision of yours will, I hope, create a good atmosphere in the Church and will calm the troubled souls of her children, while with regard to you it will preserve that disposition towards you which you deservedly enjoyed both as a Church figure and as a man. Place all your hope on the Lord, and His help will always be with you. On my part, I as the first-hierarch of the Church, call on all clergy and church activists to display, in everything that touches on the civil legislation and administration, complete loyalty. They are obliged to submit unfailingly to the governmental decrees as long as they do not violate the holy faith and in general are not contrary to Christian conscience; and they must not engage in any anti-governmental activity, and they are allowed to express neither approval nor disapproval of their actions in the churches or in private conversations, and in general they must not interfere in matters having nothing to do with the Church...”

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[242] V.V. Antonov, "Lozh' i Pravda" (Lies and Truth), *Russkij Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), II, 1994, pp. 79-80.

On February 13/26, 1930, after receiving news from Deacon K. about the true state of affairs in the Church, Metropolitan Peter wrote to Sergius: "Of all the distressing news I have had to receive, the most distressing was the news that many believers remain outside the walls of the churches in which your name is commemorated. I am filled with spiritual pain both about the disputes that have arisen with regard to your administration and about other sad phenomena. Perhaps this information is biassed, perhaps I am not sufficiently acquainted with the character and aims of the people writing to me. But the news of disturbances in the Church come to me from various quarters and mainly from clerics and laymen who have made a great impression on me. In my opinion, in view of the exceptional circumstances of Church life, when normal rules of administration have been subject to all kinds of distortion, it is necessary to put Church life on that path on which it stood during your first period as deputy. So be so good as to return to that course of action that was respected by everybody. I repeat that I am very sad that you have not written to me or confided your plans to me. Since letters come from other people, yours would undoubtedly have reached me..."[243]

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[243] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 681-682, 691-692. Protopresbyter Michael Polsky (*Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie* (The New Martyrs of Russia), op. cit., p. 133) reported that Metropolitan Peter had written to Sergius: “If you yourself do not have the strength to protect the Church, you should step down and hand over your office to a stronger person.”

From August 17, 1930, after again refusing to renounce the locum tenancy, Metropolitan Peter was imprisoned in Tobolsk and Yekaterinburg prisons in solitary confinement with no right to receive parcels or visitors. On March 11, 1931, after describing the sufferings of his life in Khe (which included the enmity of three renovationist priests), he posed the following question in a letter to J.B. Polyansky: "Will not a change in locum tenens bring with it a change also in his deputy? Of course, it is possible that my successor, if he were to find himself incapable of carrying out his responsibilities directly, would leave the same person as his deputy - that is his right. But it is certain, in my opinion, that the carrying out of his duties by this deputy would have to come to an end at the same time as the departure of the person for whom he is deputizing, just as, according to the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, with his departure the synod created by him would cease to exist. All this and other questions require thorough and authoritative discussion and canonical underpinning... Be so kind as to bow to Metropolitan Sergius on my behalf, since I am unable to do this myself, and send him my fervent plea that he, together with Metropolitan Seraphim and Archbishop Philip, to whom I also bow, work together for my liberation. I beseech them to defend, an old man who can hardly walk. I was always filled with a feeling of deep veneration and gratitude to Metropolitan Sergius, and the thought of some kind of worsening of our relations would give me indescribable sorrow."

On March 27, Metropolitan Peter wrote to B.P. Menzhinsky: "I was given a five-year exile which I served in the far north in the midst of the cruellest frosts, constant storms, extreme poverty and destitution in everything. (I was constantly on the edge of the grave.) But years passed, and there remained four months to the end of my exile when the same thing began all over again - I was again arrested and imprisoned by the Urals OGPU. After some time I was visited by comrade J.V. Polyansky, who suggested that I renounce the locum tenancy. But I could not accept such a suggestion for the following reasons which have a decisive significance for me. First of all I would be transgressing the established order according to which the locum tenens must remain at his post until the convening of a council. A council convened without the sanction of the locum tenens would be considered uncanonical and its decisions invalid. But in the case of my death the prerogatives of the locum tenens will pass to another person who will complete that which was not done by his predecessor. Moreover, my removal would bring in its wake the departure also of my deputy, Metropolitan Sergius, just as, according to his declaration, with his departure from the position of deputy the Synod created by him would cease to exist. I cannot be indifferent to such a circumstance. Our simultaneous departure does not guarantee church life from various possible frictions, and, of course, the guilt would be mine. Therefore in the given case it is necessary that we discuss this matter together, just as we discussed together the questions relating to my letter to Metropolitan Sergius dated December, 1929. Finally, my decree, coming from prison, would undoubtedly be interpreted as made under pressure, with various undesirable consequences."

In spite of this strong criticism, it is not known that Metropolitan Peter declared that

Metropolitan Sergius had fallen from grace; and according to one (possibly dubious) source, he, together with Metropolitan Cyril, refused to sign the sixth canon of the so-called "Nomadic Council" in 1928, which anathematised the sergianists.[244]

Nevertheless, he continued not only to resist pressure from the OGPU to give up the locum tenancy himself, but also rejected the right of Metropolitan Sergius to take it over after his death. Thus on March 11, 1931, he posed the following question to I.B. Polyansky: "Will not a change in locum tenens bring with it a change also in his deputy? Of course, it is possible that my successor, if he were to find himself incapable of carrying out his responsibilities directly, would leave the same person as his deputy – that is his right. But it is certain, in my opinion, that the carrying out of his duties by this deputy would have to come to an end at the same time as the departure of the person for whom he is deputizing, just as, according to the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, with his departure the synod created by him would cease to exist. All this and other questions require thorough and authoritative discussion and canonical underpinning…" He repeated the same argument in a letter to Menzhinsky later that month.[245]

We have no direct evidence for Metropolitan Peter's views after 1931. Indirectly, however, we can infer that his attitude towards Metropolitan Sergius hardened. For, as the True Orthodox Confessor and Professor Ivan Andreyev witnesses, "Approval of the position of Metropolitan Joseph [whose views on Sergius are known to have been uncompromisingly severe] was received from the exiled Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa and from Metropolitan Cyril."[246]

Moreover, "from the fact that in the last years secret relations were established between Metropolitan Peter and Metropolitan Joseph, we may conjecture that Metropolitan Peter gave his blessing, in the event of his death, to Metropolitan Joseph's heading the Russian Church in his capacity as *Extraordinary Locum Tenens*. This right was accorded to Metropolitan Joseph, as is known only to a few, by a Decision of the Local Council of 1917-18 dated January 25, 1918."[247]

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[244] Metropolitan Peter's representative, "the layman Popov" noted on canon 6: "Categorically not. He does not agree. Metr. Peter does not consider the sergianist Synod to be heretical." And Metropolitan Cyril's representative, the monk Paul (Burtsev) said: "I protest. Vladyka metropolitan does not bless the signing of this." (Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': 'Kochuiuschij' Sobor 1928 g." (The Catacomb Church: the 'Nomadic Council' of 1928), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997, p. 7.

[245] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 880-881, 883.

[246] Andreyev, "Vospominania o Katakombnoj Tserkvi v SSSR" (Reminiscences of the Catacomb Church in the USSR), in Archimandrite Panteleimon, *Luch Sveta v Zaschitu Pravoslavnoj Very, v oblichenie ateizma i v oproverzhenie doktrin neveria* (A Ray of Light in Defence of the Orthodox Faith, to the Rebuking of Atheism and the Rebuttal of the Doctrines of Unbelief), Jordanville, 1970, part 2, p. 123.

[247] *Uchenie o Tserkvi Sviatykh Novomuchenikov i Ispovednikov Rossijskikh* (The Teaching on the Church of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia), attachment to *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997, p. 7; Regelson, op. cit., p. 590.

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Metropolitan Cyril, like Metropolitan Peter, at first took a relatively "lenient" attitude towards the sergianists. Thus in 1934 he wrote: "If we reproach them for not resisting, and, therefore, of belonging to heresy, we risk depriving them of the psychological opportunity to reunite with us and losing them forever for Orthodoxy."

This relative leniency has been exploited by those who wish to make out that the MP is a true Church even now, nearly eighty years after Sergius' declaration. However, there are several reasons for thinking that Cyril was less "moderate" than he has been made out.

First, as his correspondent, another Catacomb hierarch said, he was being "excessively cautious" because of his insufficient knowledge of the Church situation from his position in exile. Secondly, he was in the unique position of being the only legal locum tenens that was able to correspond and reason with Sergius. He therefore naturally steered the dialogue to the theme of the canonical rights of the locum tenentes and their deputies, convicting Sergius of usurpation of the power of the First Hierarch. Concentrating on the *canonical-administrative* aspect of the matter, without entering into the *dogmatic* aspect of Sergius' subordination to the atheists, was bound to lead to a less serious estimate of his sin. Nevertheless, in 1934 he wrote that while the Sergianist priests administered valid sacraments, Christians who partook of them knowing of Sergius' usurpation of power and the illegality of his Synod would receive them *to their condemnation*.

Several points made by Metropolitan Cyril in his correspondence with Metropolitan Sergius are of vital importance in evaluating the significance of the various schisms that have taken place in the Orthodox Church in this century. The first is the priority of "the conciliar hierarchical conscience of the Church". As he wrote in 1929: "Church discipline is able to retain its validity only as long as it is a true reflection of the hierarchical conscience of the Conciliar [Sobornoj] Church; discipline can never take the place of this conscience". Sergius violated the hierarchical, conciliar conscience of the Church by his disregard of the views of bishops equal to him in rank.

The second is that a hierarch is justified in breaking communion with a fellow hierarch, not only for heresy, but also in order not to partake in his brother's sin. Thus while Metropolitan Cyril did not consider Sergius to have sinned in matters of faith, he was forced to break communion with him because "I have no other means of rebuking my sinning brother". If clergy have mutually opposing opinions within the Church, then their concelebration is for both "to judgement and condemnation".[248]

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[248] "Ekkleziologia sv. Kirilla (Smirnova), mitropolita Kazanskogo" (The Ecclesiology of St. Cyril (Smirnov), Metropolitan of Kazan), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi za Granitsei* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), № 1, 1991, pp. 12-14.

Again, in November, 1929, Metropolitan Cyril refused to condemn Metropolitan Joseph and his supporters, who had broken communion with Sergius; and he did not agree with the bishops in exile in Tashkent – Arseny (Stadnitsky), Nicodemus (Krotkov), Nicander (Fenomenov) and others – who condemned Joseph, considering their hopes of convening a canonical Council to be "naivety or cunning".[249]

Thirdly, while Metropolitan Cyril did not deny the sacraments of the sergianists, he did so only in respect of those clergy who had been *correctly ordained*, i.e. by non-sergianist hierarchs.

A fourth point made by the metropolitan was that even when such a break in communion occurs between two parties, both sides remain in the Church so long as dogmatic unanimity is preserved. But this immediately raised the question: had Sergius only sinned "administratively", by transgressing against the canons, as Metropolitan Cyril claimed (until 1934, at any rate), or had he sinned also "dogmatically", by transgressing against the dogma of the One Church, as Archbishop Demetrius of Gdov, among others, claimed?[250]

In the middle of the 1930s Metropolitan Cyril issued an epistle in which he called on the Catacomb hierarchs to confirm his candidacy as the lawful patriarchal locum tenens in the case of the death of Metropolitan Peter. We know the reaction of one hierarch, Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk, to this epistle. He was not enthusiastic, because he considered that in times of persecution a centralized administration was not obligatory for the Church.[251] In any case, at some time in the 1930s, as we have seen, both Metropolitan Peter and Metropolitan Cyril came to accept that Metropolitan *Joseph* should lead the Russian Church in the event of Metropolitan Peter's death.

Metropolitan Cyril's position hardened towards the end of his life. Thus in March, 1937 he wrote: "With regard to your perplexities concerning Sergianism, I can say that the very same questions in almost the same form were addressed to me from Kazan ten years ago, and then I replied affirmatively to them, because I considered everything that Metropolitan Sergius had done as a mistake which he himself was conscious of and wished to correct. Moreover, among our ordinary flock there were many people who had not investigated what had happened, and it was impossible to demand from them a decisive and active condemnation of the events. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge. The expectations that Metropolitan Sergius would correct himself have not been justified, *but there has been enough time for the formerly ignorant members of the Church, enough incentive and enough opportunity to investigate what has happened*; and very many have both investigated and understood that Metropolitan Sergius is departing from that Orthodox Church which the Holy Patriarch Tikhon entrusted to us to guard, and consequently there can be no part or lot with him for the Orthodox. The recent events have finally made clear the renovationist nature of Sergianism. We cannot know whether those believers who remain in Sergianism will be saved, because the work of eternal Salvation is a work of the mercy and grace of God. But for those who see and feel the unrighteousness of Sergianism (those are your questions) it would be unforgiveable craftiness to close one's eyes to this unrighteousness and seek there for the satisfaction of one's spiritual needs when one's conscience doubts in the possibility of receiving such satisfaction. Everything which is not of faith is sin…"[252]

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[249] V.V. Antonov, "Vazhnoe Pis'mo Mitropolita Kirilla" (An Important Letter of Metropolitan Cyril), *Russkij Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), II, 1994, p. 76. Arseny may have changed his position before his death in 1936.

[250] Andreyev, op. cit, pp. 102-103.

[251] "Novie dannia k zhizneopisaniu sviashchennomuchenika Fyodora, arkhiepiskopa Volokolamskogo, osnovannia na protokolakh doprosov 1937 g." (New Date towards a Biography of Hieromartyr Theodore, Archbishop of Volokolamsk, Based on the Protocols of Interrogations in 1937), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 48, # 8 (584), August, 1998, pp. 4-5.

This is an important document, for it shows that by 1937 Metropolitan Cyril considered that enough time had passed for the ordinary believer to come to a correct conclusion concerning the true, "renovationist" – that is, *heretical* – nature of Sergianism. So from 1937, in Metropolitan Cyril's opinion, "the excuse of ignorance" was no longer valid. What had been involuntary ignorance in the early days of the schism was now (except in exceptional circumstances caused by, for example, extreme youth or mental deficiency) *witting* ignorance – that is, *indifference to the truth or refusal to face the truth.*

This view is confirmed by Schema-Monk Epiphany (Chernov), who writes that during their imprisonment together in Chimkent, "when they let Metropolitans Cyril and Joseph go out for a walk, they stuck together: the tall Metropolitan Joseph and the stocky, short Metropolitan Cyril. And these two figures, as it seemed, merged into one, symbolising 'the unity of two in one'. The metropolitans walked in a circle and were continually engaged in conversation – after all, it was impossible to overhear them there. And during their walk they were constantly watched from a hill by some Catacomb nuns to whom the metropolitans, at the end of their walk, gave their blessing – it was necessary to disguise this, so that the guards should not notice their secret signalling."[253]

"And this signalling, as was later made known by these same Catacomb nuns, consisted further in the following sign: that when Metropolitan Cyril several times bowed beneath the elbow of Metropolitan Joseph, this meant that he completely recognized the authority and leadership of the latter for himself."[254]

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[252] Letter of Metropolitan Cyril to Hieromonk Leonid, February 23 / March 8, 1937, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 16, August 15/28, 1997, p. 7. Italics mine (V.M.).

[253] Chernov, op. cit.

[254] *Uchenie o Tserkvi Sviatykh Novomuchenikov i Ispovednikov Rossijskikh* (The Teaching on the Church of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia), op. cit., p. 7.

22. DIVISIONS AMONG THE GREEK OLD CALENDARISTS

Returning to the Old Calendarist struggle in Greece, we come to the tragic division that took place in 1937 between Metropolitans Germanus of Demetrias and Chrysostom of Florina, on the one hand, and Bishops Germanus of the Cyclades and Matthew of Bresthena, on the other. This division between the so-called "Florinites" and "Matthewites" greatly weakened the struggle of the True Orthodox and has continued (with further splinterings) to the present day.

In 1937 the Monk Mark (Khaniotis) wrote to the bishops asking for a clarification of their ecclesiological views. In June Metropolitans Germanos and Chrysostom wrote a private reply to Fr. Mark: "When a Church falls into what St. Basil the Great calls a curable error, as is the error of the Calendar, the hierarchs as individuals can wall themselves off and break their spiritual communion with the Church, so as not to become partakers of their error. However, they do not have the right to declare the Church schismatic. That is the right of a Pan-Orthodox or Great Local Council alone. In this case those who break communion with the erring Church before Synodical clarification appeal against it to a Pan-Orthodox or Great Local Council, so as to lead it back onto the Orthodox way, or, if it remains in its error, to have it proclaimed as heretical or schismatic by the Pan-Orthodox Council after the first and second admonition – heretical, if its error affects Dogma, and schismatic if it affects the Typicon and the administrative side of the Church. This is what we have done in a rigorous manner, breaking spiritual communion with the Hierarchy of the Great Church because of the error of the calendar innovation, and appealing against it to a Pan-Orthodox or Great Local Council, which is the only competent authority having the right to judge it for its error and either persuade it to forsake its error, or if it remains in it, to declare it schismatic. Thus insofar as it is one error of one Church which does not directly affect a dogma of the faith but is related to ecclesiastical anticanonicities and irregularities that are curable, in St. Basil the Great's words, it makes the erring Church *potentially schismatic, but not actually so*, until it is condemned and declared actually schismatic by a Pan-Orthodox Council…

"But let your holiness know that the Holy Chrism which is celebrated and sanctified by the Church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate retains all its grace and sanctifying energy, even if this was done by the Patriarchate after the introduction of the calendar."[255]

This statement clearly contradicted the three bishops' encyclical of 1935, which both declared that the State Church was fully schismatic and deprived of the grace of sacraments, and indicated that the dogma of the One Church had been affected by the introduction of the new calendar.

On June 30 Bishop Matthew wrote to the Synod requesting an official declaration by Metropolitan Germanus that the new calendarists were schismatics and deprived of the grace of sacraments, and that it was necessary to chrismate children baptised in the schism.

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[255] Hieromonk Amphilochius, Gnosesthe tin Alitheian (Know the Truth), Athens, 1984, pp. 17-18.

On July 5/18, Bishop Matthew again wrote to Metropolitan Germanus: "… Insofar in the course of our discussion on the conditions of this suggestion of mine, two members of the Sacred Synod lost their composure and attacked me, and insofar as threats and insults cannot diminish the seriousness of my suggestion, I have the honour to ask you kindly to convene a Synod as quickly as possible and give a reply to the above-mentioned suggestion.

"If, contrary to every hope, the Sacred Synod does not want to accept the conditions of my suggestion in accordance with the prescriptions of the divine and sacred canons, but will continue to be stubborn, then… I consider myself bound as an Orthodox Hierarch to break all spiritual communion with you, so as not to be found guilty at the terrible day of Judgement for having despised the divine and sacred canons… I will await your written reply to my suggestion until next Monday, the 13th.

"If the Holy and Sacred Synod will not accept the conditions of this suggestion of mine before this date, I will consider silence to be a rejection of my suggestion and in connection with this will break all relations with you and will determine my further position…"[256]

On September 5/18 Bishop Matthew wrote to Metropolitan Germanus: "Insofar as up to this time I have received no reply, and in view of the 15th canon of the so-called First-and-Second Council, according to which: 'He who separates from communion with his president because of some heresy condemned by the Holy Councils or Fathers, when, that is, he preaches heresy publicly and teaches it openly in church, if such people guard themselves from communion with the so-called bishop before a conciliar investigation, not only are they not subject to the epitimia decreed by the canons, but are even worthy of the honour fitting to the Orthodox. For they have condemned, not bishops, but false bishops and false teachers, and have not sundered the unity of the Church by schism, but have striven to protect the Church from schisms and divisions', and (2) insofar as in the recent letter which you gave to the Reverend Monk Mark Khaniotes, you have completely clearly declared that the sacraments accomplished by the new calendarists are valid and have Divine Grace, and that in the future you will continue to maintain spiritual communion with the innovating schismatic church of Greece… Therefore we decide: (1) to express our deepest sorrow to you and all those who follow you at your completely unexpected sudden apostasy from your original confessions and declarations; (2) to break with you and all those who follow you all spiritual communion until the Lord God wishes to enlighten you to return to your original Confession of Faith and preserve the exactness of the Sacred Canons and Traditions of the Church, not following so-called kindness, economy and condescension, as not being able to bear the burden of one such decision of yours, and so as not to be found guilty at the terrible day of Judgement of having despised the divine and sacred canons, drawing on yourselves the curses and anathemas of our Holy and God-bearing Fathers; (3) I take back all the signatures which until today I placed under the acts and remaining documents in the sessions of the Synod with you, and also ask you to annul my participation in the newspaper *The Voice of Orthodoxy*."[257]

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[256] Fr. Andrew Sidniev, *Florinskij raskol v Tserkvi IPKh Gretsii* (The Florinite Schism in the Chuch of the True Orthodox Christians of Greece); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 62-63.

It was strange that Bishop Matthew should withdraw his signature from all previous decisions of the Synod… Another disturbing feature of this encyclical was the way in which it was addressed to "the *former* Metropolitan of Demetrias Germanus, *until now* president of the Sacred Synod"[258] (later he would address him as a mere monk), as if the latter were already defrocked. Presumably he felt that the reference to "false bishops" in the 15th canon he quoted (both here and in his second "excommunication" of September 19 / October 2) was sufficient justification. And yet he nowhere demonstrates that the two metropolitans had uttered *heresy.* Did he mean the heresy of newcalendarism? But the metropolitans rejected it. In any case, if they were being accused of heresy, they should have been summoned to a trial. Canonical due process requires that a bishop must be tried by at least twelve bishops, that he must be summoned to present his case, and that he can be defrocked in absentia only if he has refused to appear after three summonses by two bishops. If canonical procedure could not be exactly fulfilled in such a small Synod, at any rate some reference to it was surely obligatory. And yet Matthew did not speak of a trial…

On September 9, the two metropolitans, alarmed by the confusion which their statement had created, seemed to backtrack, writing: "As regards the validity or invalidity of the sacraments performed by the new calendarists, we abide by what we proclaimed in June, 1935, that the sanctifying grace of the sacraments is found in and works through those ecclesiastical ministers who keep to the sacred traditions and canons without making any innovation, but not through those who have distanced themselves from the sacred canons and remain under the curses of the Fathers."[259]

On September 14/27 Bishop Germanos of the Cyclades wrote to all the True Orthodox Christians: "… We have been forced to reject two hierarchs, the former Germanos of Dmitriades and the former Chrysostom of Florina, and break all links with them, insofar as they have trampled on and cast out everything that they formerly taught in the presence of thousands of people in Colonus. They have fallen into the same category as the new calendarists themselves insofar as, on the one hand, they recognize the sacraments of the latter as valid, and on the other, they forbid us to consider the so-called 'church' of Chrysostomos Papadopoulos as schismatic, in spite of the fact that it has clearly violated the Canons of the Holy Apostles, the decrees of the Holy Seven

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[257] Sidniev, op. cit; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
[258] Bishop Andrew, op. cit., pp. 68-74.
[259] Metropolitan Calliopius, *Ta Patria*, op. cit., p. 282. Stavros Markou dates these words to July 9, 1937.

Ecumenical Councils and the Sacred Tradition of the Church. They have accepted communion with the new calendarists in order to serve their own interests…"[260]

This language was astonishingly unjust. The most that the two metropolitans could be accused of was inconsistency with regard to the status of the new calendarists: inside or outside the True Church. To say that they were in the same category as the new calendarists themselves, or that they had accepted communion with them, was demagogical nonsense – neither metropolitan communed with the new calendarists from 1935 until their deaths. And here Bishop Germanos adopts the same uncanonical tactic as Bishop Matthew in calling Metropolitan Germanos "the former metropolitan", as if he had already been defrocked. Fortunately, Bishop Germanos, unlike Bishop Matthew, was to repent of his hastiness and return into communion with Metropolitan Chrysostom…

True: in 1937 the two metropolitans softened the strict position they had taken in 1935. And yet their wavering was understandable: Metropolitan Chrysostom was in negotiations with the Antiochian and Jerusalem patriarchates for the convening of an Ecumenical Council that would condemn the new calendarists, and he knew that these patriarchates, being still in communion with the new calendarists, would never accept that they were already condemned. Of course, from a Matthewite perspective, the attempt to win the cooperation of these patriarchates was in itself a kind of betrayal; for, in accordance with the words of St. John Chrysostom that they loved to quote, "he who communes with an excommunicate is himself excommunicated"; so the Antiochian and Jerusalem patriarchates – indeed, *all* the Local Churches – were, according to their reasoning, outside the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. and yet in May, 1935 the three hierarchs in official communications had not rejected the Old Calendarist Local Churches that were in communion with the new calendarists (Antioch, Jerusalem, Serbia, etc.), but sought to "collaborate" with them.[261] So if these Churches still remained inside the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church in spite of being in communion with the new calendarists, how was it possible to condemn Metropolitan Chrysostom, who was *not* in communion with the new calendarists?

On October 10/23 at a Council in Athens Bishops Germanos and Matthew together with the clergy who supported them officially declared that the two metropolitans had fallen away from the true confession. And it was declared that the sacraments of the new calendarists, including their chrism sanctified after 1924, were deprived of saving grace.

For two vicar-bishops to condemn their metropolitans in this way without a trial was completely uncanonical. But it raised the further question: if the sacraments of the new calendarists were invalid as early as 1924, then the two metropolitans who stayed in the State Church between 1924 and 1935 lost the grace of the episcopate in that period. Consequently, when they joined the Sacred Struggle in 1935, they were simple laymen.

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[260] Quoted by Fr. Roman Pavlov.

[261] http://www.genuineorthodoxchurch.net/images/GOCDemetrias1935eng.pdf; http://www.genuineorthodoxchurch.net/images/GOC1935DiangelmaBeng.pdf.

Nor could their episcopate be restored to them by an assembly of priests and laity, however numerous. So their ordinations of Matthew and Germanos were invalid! Such were some of the contradictions that the "Matthewite" position entailed…

On October 17 Metropolitan Chrysostom wrote to Metropolitan Germanus: "You should ignore the encylicals of the bishops of Bresthena [Matthew] and the Cyclades [Germanus] who have fallen away, insofar as they have condemned us for reasons of avarice, since they cannot abide our criticism of their unlawful ordinations and other crimes, and have taken the side of the old Administrative Council of Manesis and Gounaris, whom until yesterday they were calling profiteers and usurpers. As an excuse for condemning us they have found the reason that we have refused to allow a repeat chrismation of children baptised by newcalendarist priests, following the ban by the divine and sacred canons, and that we have refused to declare the newcalendarist Church heretical and schismatical, and their sacraments invalid. But the main reason for their condemnation for the holy one of Bresthena is the fact that we have hindered him from using our sacred struggle for his own enrichment, while for the holy one of the Cyclades it is the fact that we have forbidden him from carrying out unlawful ordinations of priests and deacons, not for the sake of serving our Sacred Struggle, but for the sake of creating his own party and seizing the leadership of our struggle. Both of them, casting off every restraint of conscience and fear of God, have proceeded to publish an encyclical to the True Orthodox Christians and are trying by means of lies and disgusting slanders to present us as deserters and traitors to the struggle because we did not want to despise the divine and sacred canons and proclaim the Greek Church to be schismatical and its sacraments invalid, and to condemn to spiritual death five million Greek brothers who in purity of heart follow the new calendar, and to enter into contradiction with the remaining Orthodox Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Russia, Serbia, etc., which not only have not broken communion with the newcalendarist churches, but even serve together with their clergy. And this because the newcalendarist Churches have not been proclaimed to be schismatic by a Pan-Orthodox Council, which alone has the right according to the sacred canons to condemn and declare them schismatical if they do not depart from the error of the new calendar. The divine and God-bearing Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils gave the right to proclaim individual people and churches schismatical neither to individual people nor to local churches, but [only] to an Ecumenical Council, which expresses the Catholic Orthodox Church and whose decisions are made through the inspiration of the All-Holy Spirit. For this reason we, honouring the canons and decisions of the Ecumenical Councils, have refused to proclaim the Greek Church schismatical, and have confined ourselves only to breaking ecclesiastical communion with the Archbishop of Athens and the hierarchs who think like him, so as not to be participants in the calendar innovation. And we have done this in accordance with the 15th canon of the First-and-Second Ecumenical Council, which gives the right only to break ecclesiastical communion with him who violates tradition until a conciliar decision, by which alone individual people and churches are declared schismatical and their sacraments invalid. The above-mentioned bishops have taken this refusal of ours based on the canons and apostolic decrees as an excuse, and unfortunately they have fallen morally to such a degree that they place the authority of the Society of the True Orthodox Christians under the presidency of Manesis and Gounaris above our authority – we who in the course of 35 years have done nothing other than declare the dogmas of Orthodoxy and rightly divide the word of divine truth. But the main motive inciting them to condemn us is a striving to be free from any control on our part, and freely and ignorantly to use our sacred struggle on the excuse of feigned piety. A proof of the fact that they are employing demagogy and fishing for glory and honours at the expense of the struggle is the fact that they have both accepted the titles of metropolitans, although we at their consecration gave them the title of bishops, which only adventurers and intellectually and morally unstable people could do without shame. It is also a shameless lie that, as they say, the protosyncellus beat up the bishop of the Cyclades at one session of the Synod, which has not assembled already for two months because of the obstruction of the bishops…"[262]

Metropolitan Chrysostom wrote to Bishop Germanos as follows: "When your Grace, like another Pope, characterizes us as heretics, because we have not proclaimed the Church of Greece schismatic and her Mysteries invalid on account of the Archbishop's innovation, but have restricted ourselves to breaking off ecclesiastical communion with him even before a Synodal verdict…, then you must also proclaim the other Orthodox Churches, which have not broken communion with the innovating Archbishop, heretics twice over, in which case, you will be left as the sole Orthodox Hierarch, along with your like-minded collaborator, the Bishop of Vresthena!"[263]

On November 9/22, Metropolitan Chrysostom wrote to the two vicar-bishops that the State Church of Greece was potentially, and not actually schismatic, and that it could be said to be actually schismatic and graceless only on the basis of a decision of an Ecumenical or Pan-Orthodox Council.[264] In fact, it seems that Metropolitan Chrysostom was hopeful that such a Pan-Orthodox Council was about to be convened. In December he and Metropolitan Germanus wrote to the ministry of religion suggesting that a "Pre-Council" be convened on Mount Athos with representatives from both the old and the new calendar to decide the calendar question. However, if for any reason this "Pre-Council" should not be convened before Pascha, then the royal decree of 1923 ordering the retention of the Julian calendar should be enforced. If these conditions are accepted, then the two metropolitans agreed not to proceed to any new ordinations or ecclesiastical actions until Pascha.[265]

However, by 1940 the metropolitans had reverted to the stricter position. Thus on August 30, together with Chrysostom of Zacynthus, who had returned to the Old Calendar, they declared: "Concerning the validity or invalidity of the sacraments performed by the newcalendarists, we remain with everything that we declared in June, 1935, according to which 'the sanctifying grace of the mysteries, according to the spirit of the divine and sacred canons and our opinion, exist and act through those Church servers who keep the sacred traditions and canons of the Orthodox Church, without accepting any innovation, and not through those who have separated from the sacred traditions and violated the divine and sacred canons, and who, consequently, are under the curses of the Holy Fathers. In order that a new calendarist should be received into our Old Calendar Church, he must through a petition declare his sacred intention to us, the hierarchs, to whom alone it behoves to evaluate the method of their reception, either through a written declaration, as the First Ecumenical Council (canon eight) and the early Church received heretics and schismatics by ecclesiastical economy, or by a second chrismation, in accordance with the fifth canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. With regard to the fact that we bishops alone, as representatives of the Church, are competent to be treasure-houses of Grace, we cite the thirty-ninth Apostolic canon, which so decrees. Priests and deacons can do nothing without the will of the bishop. For the people of the Lord are entrusted to him, and he will give an account for their souls."[266]

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[262] Sidniev, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 65-67.

[263] Quoted by Stavros Markou, "The Matthewites: The First Schismatics of the Greek Old Calendar Movement".

[264] Sidniev, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 68-70.

[265] Sidniev, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 68-70.

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[266] Encyclical № 1844; Bishop Matthew of Bresthena, epistle of September 21, 1944; in Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij (1939-1949)* (Chronicle of Church Events (1939-1949)), part 3, http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis3.htm, pp. 10-11.

23. THE VATICAN AND RUSSIA

Russia's age-old enemy, the Vatican, at first appeared to condemn the revolution in Russia, and support the Orthodox. On March 12, 1919 Pope Benedict XV sent Lenin a protest against the persecutions of the Orthodox clergy, while Archbishop Ropp sent Patriarch Tikhon a letter of sympathy. The Bolshevik Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin noted with dissatisfaction this "solidarity with the servers of the Orthodox Church".[267]

In general, however, relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church were very bad. In 1922 Hieromartyr Benjamin of Petrograd said to Fyodorov: "You offer us unification… and all the while your Latin priests, behind our backs, are sowing ruin amongst our flock."

Nicholas Boyeikov writes: "In his epistle of 25 June, 1925, the locum tenens of the All-Russian Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, who suffered torture in Soviet exile, expressed himself on the 'Eastern Rite' as follows: 'the Orthodox Christian Church has many enemies. Now they have increased their activity against Orthodoxy. The Catholics, by introducing the rites of our divine services, are seducing the believing people – especially those among the western churches which have been Orthodox since antiquity – into accepting the unia, and by this means they are distracting the forces of the Orthodox Church from the more urgent struggle against unbelief.'"[268]

Protodeacon Herman Ivanov-Trinadtsaty writes: "Pope Pius X (who was canonized in 1954) pronounced on the very eve of World War I, 'Russia is the greatest enemy of the [Roman] Church.' Therefore it is not surprising that the Roman Catholic world greeted the Bolshevik Revolution with joy. 'After the Jews the Catholics did probably more than anyone else to organize the overthrow of tsarist power. At least they did nothing to stop it.' Shamelessly and with great candour they wrote in Rome as soon as the Bolshevik 'victory' became evident: 'there has been uncontainable pleasure over the fall of the tsarist government and Rome has not wasted any time in entering into negotiations with the Soviet government.' When a leading Vatican dignitary was asked why the Vatican was against France during World War II, he exclaimed: 'The victory of the Entente allied with Russia would have been as great a catastrophe for the Roman Catholic Church as the Reformation was.' Pope Pius conveyed this feeling in his typically abrupt manner: 'If Russia is victorious, then the schism is victorious.'…

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[267] Peter Sokolov, "Put' Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi v Rossii-SSSR (1917-1961)" (The Path of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia-USSR (1917-1961)), in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v SSSR: Sbornik* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the USSR: A Collection), Munich, 1962, p. 16.

[268] *Tserkovnie Vedomosti* (Church Gazette), 1925, №№ 21-22); Boyeikov, *Tserkov', Rus' i Rim* (The Church, Russia and Rome), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, p. 13.

"Even though the Vatican had long prepared for it, the collapse of the Orthodox Russian Empire caught it unawares. It very quickly came to its senses. The collapse of Russia did not yet mean that Russia could turn Roman Catholic. For this, a new plan of attack was needed. Realizing that it would be as difficult for a Pole to proselytise in Russia as for an Englishman in Ireland, the Vatican understood the necessity of finding a totally different method of battle with Orthodoxy, which would painlessly and without raising the slightest suspicion, ensnare and subordinate the Russian people to the Roman Pope. This Machiavellian scheme was the appearance of the so-called 'Eastern Rite', which its defenders understood as 'the bridge by which Rome will enter Russia', to quote an apt expression of K.N. Nikolaiev.

"This treacherous plot, which can be likened to a ship sailing under a false flag, had very rapid success in the first years after the establishment of Soviet power. This too place in blood-drenched Russia and abroad, where feverish activity was begun amongst the hapless émigrés, such as finding them work, putting their immigration status in order, and opening Russian-language schools for them and their children.

"It cannot be denied that there were cases of unmercenary help, but in the overwhelming majority of cases, this charitable work had a thinly disguised confessional goal, to lure by various means the unfortunate refugees into what seemed at first glance to be true Orthodox churches, but which at the same time commemorated the pope…

"In Russia the experiment with the 'Eastern Rite' lasted more than ten years… The heart and soul of the papal 'Ostpolitik', its eastern policies, was a Jesuit, the French Bishop d'Erbigny, who was specially authorized by the pope to conduct negotiations with the Kremlin for the wide dissemination of Roman Catholicism in the Soviet Union and by the same token the supplanting of Orthodoxy in Russia and in Russian souls.

"With this in mind, d'Erbigny travelled three times to the Soviet Union on a French diplomatic passport. He consecrated several Roman Catholic hierarchs with the aim of building up a group of Russian Catholic clergymen who would be acceptable to the Soviet authorities. Let us listen to the degree of open amorality that these clerics were capable of: 'Bolshevism is liquidating priests, desecrating churches and holy places, and destroying monasteries. Is this not where the religious mission of irreligious Bolshevism lies, in the disappearance of the carriers of schismatic thought, as it were presenting a "clean table", a tabula rasa, which gives us the possibility of spiritual recreation.' For those to whom it is not clear just what kind of spiritual reconstruction the Benedictine monk Chrysostom Bayer is referring to, his thoughts can be amplified by the official …Catholic journal, *Bayrischer Kurier*: 'Bolshevism is creating the possibility of the conversion of stagnant Russia to Catholicism.'

"No one less than the exarch of the Russian Catholics, Leonid Fyodorov, when on trial in March of 1923 along with fourteen other clergymen and one layman, pathetically testified to the sincerity of his feelings in relation to the Soviet authorities, who, Fyodorov thought later, did not fully understand what could be expected from Roman Catholicism. He explained: 'From the time that I gave myself to the Roman Catholic Church, my cherished dream has been to reconcile my homeland with this church, which for me is the only true one. But we were not understood by the government. All Latin Catholics heaved a sigh of relief when the October Revolution took place. I myself greeted with enthusiasm the decree on the separation of Church and State… Only under Soviet rule, when Church and State are separated, could we breathe freely. As a religious believer, I saw in this liberation the hand of God.

"Let us not lose sight of the fact that all these declarations by Roman Catholics, who were quite friendly with the Soviets, were pronounced during the nightmarish period when the Soviets were trying to eradicate the Orthodox Church. Keeping in mind that Vatican diplomacy adheres to the principle that the end justifies the means, which is illustrated throughout its centuries-old history, the game which the Vatican has been playing with Moscow should be clearly understood. The essence of the matter is that Russia has become a sacrifice to two principles hostile to it, Catholicism and godless communism, which are drawn together by a curious concurrence of interests. Moscow realizes that the eradication of faith from the Russian soul is a hopeless task. As long as the Russian Church remained faithful to itself, and uncompromising towards the godless power, courageously witnessing to the fundamental incompatibility between Christian and communist principles, the Soviet leaders were ready for two reasons to graciously study the variant of Roman Catholicism offered to them. By this means they hoped to manipulate the religiousness of the Russian soul.

"The first reason was Rome's consistent, impeccable loyalty to the communist regime, both in the U.S.S.R. and outside it [until 1930]. Secondly, it was advantageous to the Kremlin, or simply entertaining, that the religious needs of the Russians should be satisfied by this centuries-old enemy of Orthodoxy. For their part, the Catholics were ready to close their eyes to all the atrocities of Bolshevism, including the shooting of the Roman Catholic Bishop Butkevich in April of 1923 and the imprisonment of Bishops Tseplyak, Malyetsky and Fyodorov. Six weeks later, the Vatican expressed its sorrow over the assassination of the Soviet agent Vorovsky in Lausanne! The People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs told the German Ambassador, 'Pius XI was amiable to me in Genoa, expressing the hope that we [the Bolsheviks] would break the monopoly of the Orthodox Church in Russia, thus clearing a path for him.'

"We have discovered information of the greatest importance in the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A secret telegram № 266 of February 6, 1925 from Berlin, stated that the Soviet ambassador, Krestinsky, told Cardinal Pacelli (the future Pius XII) that Moscow would not oppose the existence of Roman Catholic bishops and a metropolitan on Russian territory. Furthermore, the Roman clergy were offered the very best conditions. Six days later, secret telegram № 284 spoke of permission being granted for the opening of a Roman Catholic seminary. Thus, while our holy New Martyrs were being annihilated with incredible cruelty, the Vatican was conducting secret negotiations with Moscow. In short, Rome attempted to gain permission to appoint the necessary bishops and even permission to open a seminary. Our evidence shows that this question was discussed once more in high circles in the autumn of 1926. In all likelihood, it had not been satisfactorily settled earlier. This might be viewed as the culmination of the unnaturally close relations between the Vatican and the Soviet government."

In July, 1927 Metropolitan Sergius wrote his notorious declaration. Having broken Sergius, the Bolsheviks no longer needed the Catholics. And so, as an "unexpected and indirect result" of the declaration, writes Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "Moscow put an end to the negotiations and the attention it was devoting to Vatican offers… The restitution of the traditional [in appearance] Russian Orthodox Church, neutralized as it were, seemed more useful to the Soviet authorities than the Vatican. From then on, the Soviets lost interest in the Vatican. Only at the end of 1929 and the beginning of 1930 did the Vatican finally admit that it had suffered a political defeat and began vociferously to condemn the Bolshevik crimes. It had somehow not noticed them until 1930. Only in 1937 did Pope Pius XI release the encyclical *Divino Redemptori* (Divine Redeemer), which denounced communism…"[269]

However, for a while the Catholics were certainly in with a chance… Thus Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich) told the Catholic Bishop Névé that "the current state of the Orthodox Church is so grievous that it can only save itself by making an alliance with the Catholic centre. Otherwise, nothing will ever be straightened out again… At least one diocese should do it first, and others would follow suit later."[270] This suggestion was acted upon in the 1930s by Archbishop Bartholomew (Remov), who secretly adopted Eastern Rite Catholicism.

An interesting aspect of Russian-Vatican relations was the role played by Great Prince Cyril Vladimirovich, who in 1924 proclaimed himself Tsar of Russia. Cyril, who had been very quick to welcome the February revolution, had no legitimate claim to the throne – Tsar Nicholas had blocked the "Cyrillovichi" from the succession because of his unlawful marriage, and his claim was also rejected by other leading Romanovs.[271] Therefore he needed support from other powers – notably, the Vatican.

"Truly," writes Michael Nazarov, "in his search for support 'Cyril I' and his activist wife were ready to display 'flexibility' both to the right (in the direction of Hitler's party, which was then being born), and to the left (towards American billionaires, to the point of creating a 'democratic monarchy' with a Council, in which half the places belonged to American appointees), and in the direction of the Vatican, which in the 1920s was attempting to conclude a concordat with the Bolsheviks for the Catholicization of Russia at the expense of a prostrate Orthodoxy.

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[269] Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "The Vatican and Russia", http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/new.htm. See also Oleg Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii* (Russia's Crown of Thorns), Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, pp. 464-465.

[270] Osipova, op. cit., p. 133.

[271] But he had the support of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky).

"Now the Catholics themselves recognize that in their archives there are documents about these attempts of Great Prince Cyril Vladimirovich to be confirmed in the role of heir to the Russian throne. 'Through his personal representative he established contact with Cardinal Gaspari, the papal secretary of state, and also with the Jesuit Bishop D'Herbigny in an attempt to assure himself of the support of the Vatican… In return, he [Cyril – M.N.] promised that after his ascent on the throne of the Romanovs, he would give official recognition to Russian Catholicism in the form of a Russian exarchate, and recognize a possible Catholic-Orthodox unia… However, the Vatican, acting realistically, preferred to continue its secret negotiations with the red regime.' In 1929 Great Prince Cyril repeated his attempt. On learning that the negotiations between the Vatican and the Bolsheviks had failed, 'he invited a Jesuit [D'Herbigny – M.N.] to his house in Brittany and gave through him a letter to the Pope. Cyril promised to give freedom of religious propaganda in Russia to Catholicism in the case of the fall of the Soviet regime and his ascent on the throne of the Romanovs. In the form of a payback, he wanted the Pope to give his venture his support and recognize him as 'the legitimate and Providence-sent heir to the Russian throne'. However, Cyril's suggestion was again turned down – for the same reasons: the Vatican was hoping for an improvement in relations with the Soviet authorities."[272]

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[272] Nazarov, *Kto Naslednik Rossijskogog Prestola?* (Who is the Heir to the Russian Throne?), Moscow, 1996, pp. 35-36.

24. THE SERBS AND THE CONCORDAT

The kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had been formed after the First World War. In accordance with the plan of the major world powers, it was a centralized State ruled by a Serbian Orthodox king and a parliament. The Catholic Croats resented the power of the Serbs, and tension between the two communities was high throughout the inter-war period.

T.V. writes: "In both public and private life King Alexander was a convinced supporter of Yugoslav unity. Once while the king was in Zagreb [the Croat capital], there was a reception and a ball. At the ball they introduced to the king a lady who, after curtseying, said:

"'I am a Serb from Zagreb.'

"'And I,' replied the king with a gentle smile, 'am a Croat from Belgrade…'"[273]

But the Croats did not feel the same towards the Serbian King and the Orthodox Church. In 1932 Metropolitan Dositheus (Vasič) was appointed to the see of Zagreb in Croatia, where the Orthodox were in a minority. Alexis Gerovsky, the Carpatho-Russian political and religious activist, wrote: "Dositheus' appointment to Zagreb elicited great discontent among the Catholics. The name of Bishop Dositheus was already blacklisted because he 'by his propaganda has converted the Carpatho-Russians to Orthodoxy'… When some years before the Second World War Bishop Dositheus told me that he had been appointed as metropolitan in Zagreb, I besought him not to accept this appointment, since he had never been there and did not know the religious fanaticism of the Zagreb Croats… I mentioned to him [the Catholic Archbishop] Stepinac, who was already famous for his religious intolerance, and I warned him that he would suffer many unpleasantnesses from him. 'Stepinac, who was educated for seven years in a Jesuit seminary in Rome,' I said, 'will feel offended that an Orthodox metropolitan should be implanted in his capital'… I advised him to convince the members of the Synod to send to Zagreb a bishop from those who had been born before the First World War and raised in Austro-Hungary, and who was already familiar with types like Stepinac. But Vladyka told me that it was his duty to obey the will of the patriarch, and he went to Zagreb. When, several months later, I again met him in Belgrade, he told me that I had been right. He was often insulted in the street. Sometime the windows of his house were broken at night. Stones even fell into his bedroom. I asked Vladyka whether he had spoken to the police. He replied that it was not fitting for a bishop to call the police. But when I told him that in such a case his enemies would think that he feared them, and would be still more brazen, Vladyka replied: 'No, they know that I am not afraid of them. When they revile me or spit at me, I simply raise my hands and bless them with the sign of the cross.'"[274]

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[273] T.V., "Svetloj pamiati nezabvennago ego velichestva korolia vitiazia Aleksandra I Yugoslavianskago" (To the Radiant Memory of his Majesty, the Unforgettable Knight, Alexander I of Yugoslavia), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 24 (1765), December 15/28, 2004, p. 7.

In 1934 King Alexander was assassinated in Marseilles by the Croat Ustashi terrorists. According to one source[275], the terrorists were under the direction of the SS, "Teutonic sword". Others believe they were directed by the Grand Orient of France. Still others – by Mussolini. This last is the most likely version…

Whatever the truth about his death, there is no doubt that in King Alexander not only the Serbs, but also the Russian Church Abroad whose headquarters was in Serbia, lost a great defender.

Although the Serbs had invited the Russians to Serbia, by the beginning of the Second World War it became clear that the ROCOR Synod would have to move to another country sooner or later. Nevertheless, ROCOR always remained grateful to the Serbs for the protection they had been offered. Patriarch Barnabas defended ROCOR even in its split with the Moscow Patriarchate[276], and King Alexander remained their constant defender.

The most important event of the inter-war years in Yugoslavia was the signing of a Concordat between the government of Prime Minister Stoyadinovič and the Vatican. This was done in order to solve the problem of the integration of the Catholic Croats into the united kingdom of Yugoslavia. However, its heavily pro-Catholic bias only served to increase tensions.

Hieroschemamonk (now Bishop) Akakije (Stankevič) writes: "Drafts of the text were prepared in 1923, in 1925 and 1931. The final text of the Concordat was signed in Rome on July 25, 1935. Stoyadinovič was brought to the helm of the king's government by the Duke-Regent Pavle Karageorgevič. This solution Duke Pavle chose with the consent of the British ruling circles. It was believed that Stoyadinovič would be able to come to an understanding with Maček's Croatian peasants' party, and also that he would lead the policy of rapprochement with Germany and Italy, since British policy in Europe at that time was strictly anti-communist and anti-Soviet. As assumed by some, Stoyadinovič, as a trader and a risk-taker, immediately calculated that, by the acceptance of the Concordat, he would achieve two of his goals: to gain the Catholic Church's support, as the leader of five million Croatian Catholics, and to improve relations with Fascist Italy in order to become closer to the Triple Pact. In addition to this, he was convinced that the contract with the Vatican would be concluded without any problems. As he writes in his memoirs, published after the war in Argentina, his self-confidence was based on a very broad preparation, in which he included the whole state apparatus. In the first place, he thought that a considerable number of newsmen and newspapers were under his control. He even thought that among those preparing the documents were a number of his own men. His informants were constantly telling him what was being said about the Concordat in the Serbian Orthodox Church. In the struggle for the Concordat nothing was to be left to chance. He seemed to have been convinced about a positive outcome, but Stoyadinovič could not have imagined what a storm the Concordat would arouse.

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[274] Andrew Shestakov, Kogda terror stanovitsa zakonom, iz istorii gonenij na Pravoslavnuiu Tserkov' v Khorvatii v seredine XX v. (When terror becomes the law: from the history of the persecutions on the Orthodox Church in Croatia in the middle of the 20th century); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 22-23.

[275] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 43.

[276] A.A. Kostriukov, "K istorii vzaimootnoshenij mezhdu Serbskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkoviu i Arkhierejskim Sinodom v Sremskikh Karlovtsakh" (Towards a History of the Mutual Relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Hierarchical Synod in Sremsky Karlovtsy), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'*, N 2 (682), February, 2009, pp. 1-13.

"In the beginning nobody rejected it, even Patriarch Barnabas was convinced that everything would be alright with the Concordat, because it was based on an idea of King Alexander, and as such it could not have been in conflict with the interests of the Serbian Orthodox Church. But analysis later revealed that a number of articles in the Concordat compromised the religious equality guaranteed by the Constitution. So the patriarch changed his position, and became an ardent opponent of the Concordat. By signing the Concordat, the Catholic Church was to receive from the State larger privileges than the Orthodox Church already had. In the evaluation of Professor Sergije Troitsky, who in a special brochure analysed the project of the Concordat, article number 7 and some others obliged the Yugoslav State to accept the Catholic Code Juris Canonici, which would, if accepted, become a parallel constitution. The sharpest argument related to the article by which the Catholic Church would have 'full rights to freely and publicly execute its mission in the kingdom of Yugoslavia'. In formulating this article, the term 'mission' was used, which was unacceptable to the Orthodox Church. In the Concordats accepted in other European countries, this problem was resolved by the statement that the Catholic faith would be freely and publicly confessed… By the term 'mission' the kingdom of Yugoslavia was being characterised as a pagan country… The project of the Concordat gave the Catholic Church a missionary character as if Yugoslavia were an unenlightened, pagan country. The approval of the special status of the Catholic Church was discovered in many other articles of the Concordat. For example, the article about marriage in the Catholic Church said that… for all citizens being married in the Catholic Church the obligation to register as a civil marriage was removed. In the same article there was another questionable position, which obliged the civil powers that in the case of mixed marriages, at the request of an insulted Catholic side, they should take care that the other side had to fulfil the promise that all the sons and the daughters without exception should be educated in the Catholic faith. With such and similar articles the Catholic Church was given a major advantage over all other confessions in the State, as Patriarch Barnabas said: 'Giving the Catholic Church the position of the main and dominant State Church, the Concordat puts all other confessions, and especially the Church of the majority of citizens in the State, the Orthodox Church, in the position of being tolerated', which destroyed the rule of religious equality that was guaranteed by the State Constitution.

“All publications critical of the Concordat were prohibited or censored. The little things that were missed by the State censors were not enough to explain to the public the seriousness of the Concordat crisis and the sharpness of the conflict that began between the highest ranks in the Orthodox Church and State. The Hierarchical Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church held an extraordinary meeting on November 24, 1936, and discussed the position of the Serbian Church after the acceptance of the laws about the State-recognized confessions. The Serbian Orthodox Church could no longer peacefully watch how the Catholic Church in the kingdom of Yugoslavia was receiving rights and privileges that it had nowhere else in Europe, and which even the Serbian Church did not have as the State Church of Serbia.

“On January 19, 1937, before the Orthodox New Year, Patriarch Barnabas finally delivered his judgement on the Concordat. The censors saw it, the public did not receive the message that the leader of the Serbian Church delivered in his traditional New Year message to the faithful. The censored text published in the newspaper *Politika* could have been understood to mean that the patriarch looked forward to the Concordat without much excitement. What Patriarch Barnabas really said in his New Year message, a part of the public found out from the illegal leaflet entitled ‘What the Newspapermen were Forbidden to Publish’, in which the whole message for the new year of 1937 was printed. Whoever read at least one passage from the leaflet understood why Stoyadinovič had forbidden the publication of the patriarch’s New Year message: ‘… For completely unknown reasons, and incomprehensible causes, they have made a contract with the black leader of the Black International (the Patriarch was thinking of the Pope). By this contract they want to bring that leader to triumph in the Balkans, where he has been trying to triumph for a thousand years. The Byzantine patriarchs and emperors were the first to fight against this black leader and his Jesuit army. When their arms lost strength, our glorious Nemanja dynasty headed by St. Sava accepted the struggle. When the Serbian kingdom fell at Kosovo, even the Turks fought against the Latin attacks on the Balkans. The Turks knew the false character of that International, so they did not give it the Balkans. The Turks knew the destructive impact of this international within the State. They knew that this International uses all means, intrigues and cunning strategems, so they made no compromise with it. The Orthodox Faith was sometimes persecuted by the Ottomans, but they considered it to be a faith and respected it as a faith. But they did not look on that Black International as a faith, but as politics. And so, my brothers, to that unscrupulous political organization our rulers today have widely opened the gates, and allowed it to stand firmly in the Balkans. And who, and when? Not some strangers, but baptized sons of the Church of St. Sava… Honour to the Turks, and shame to such Orthodox and such Serbs.’ Explaining why he hadn’t raised his voice earlier against this situation, Patriarch Barnabas continued to pour out his soul’s anger: ‘… They complain that we introduce politics into the Church! We are not bringing politics into the Church, but they are introducing poison into the whole national organism. Those who have lost their wisdom, their patriotism and their sincerity… Who is going to tell people the truth if not the people’s Holy Church? From where shall the voice of God and the voice of the nation's conscience be heard if not from the Church of St. Sava? I am not afraid to say this. I hope that I'm not too late in saying this. Maybe I should have said this earlier. I'm afraid I'm going to give an answer for this before God's judgement. But all the time I expected, like all conscientious people in this country, that the evil would be stopped…' After seeing that this message of the patriarch did not reach the broad public, Stoyadinovich made an effort to soften the position of the Church's hierarchy, trying to convince them that there was absolutely nothing in the Concordat that could in any way harm the Serbian Church and the Orthodox Faith. From his discussion with the hierarchs, he soon realized, as he later wrote in his memoirs, that all his effort was in vain. No arguments helped. The Concordat had already been 'condemned'. Since then, the struggle over the Concordat became a war between the Orthodox Church and her spiritual army, on the one hand, and the State and its powerful apparatus, on the other. Using different religious gatherings and festal meetings, the priests and bishops from the ambon pronounced, with a cross in their hands, the fiercest condemnation of those who were in favour of the Concordat. The State used very powerful censorship to ban all the literature against the Concordat. The department of state security with the ministry of internal affairs sent instructions to all local government and police authorities to stop local people signing petitions and sending representatives to Belgrade to demand the repeal of the Concordat. In the parliament, the main debate over the ratification of the Concordat was about to start. On the same day an extraordinary session of the Hierarchical Council, the highest institution in the Serbian Orthodox Church, began. The tense atmosphere became even tenser when information was received on the health of Patriarch Barnabas, signed every day by three specialists. The patriarch became ill at the beginning of June, during a regular session of the Hierarchical Council. As it was known that the patriarch was opposed to the Concordat, rumours started that the leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church had been poisoned. One group of national deputies in the parliament demanded from the minister of internal affairs that he conduct an investigation to find out whether the patriarch had been poisoned by his servant, and whether the servant had been put up to it by some people outside the patriarchate. In the patriarchate the belief was that his personal servant had poisoned him, so he was dismissed from his post for a while, and until he disappeared without trace he was under observation. The patriarchate itself made its own investigation into this. So on July 8, at almost the same time, two bodies were in session, the Council for the Concordat and the extraordinary Hierarchical Council. At the same time, in all the churches of Belgrade, prayers were organized for the patriarch's health, and many of the faithful attended. These gatherings added to the tension, and passions were ready to explode. Police control over all religious activity was strengthened. The voting on the Concordat within the Council passed it with a very small majority. But the final battle was just ahead.

"The government used all means against the opponents of the Concordat. The conflicts between the representatives of the government and the citizens became serious. Opponents of the Concordat were said to be religious fanatics, and… it looked as if civil war would break out. In conflict with the police, some even gave their lives, as Vladyka Nikolai of Žiča confirmed in his famous message in Valyevo: '… Here are the names of those who we know were killed. They are: Milovan Zhivanovič from the village of Yanilo, Lyubomir Spassovič from the village of Koračitsa, George Todorovič from Bielina, Dragitsa Bostanovič from Sarajevo. And how many others were wounded, how many others reported to hospital, and how many ran into the cornfields and woods, afraid to report to the hospital, fearing to be arrested and interrogated. And how many others were dismissed from their posts, how many were forced to retire, and how many were humiliated and insulted? Thousands and thousands of sons in these sixty days suffered and are suffering for our holy national faith and holy Orthodox Church.' As a result of all these events, and the displeasure of the people, which was growing from day to day, Stoyadinovič's government was in a hurry to complete the job of accepting the Concordat. That was the main reason why the meeting of the national parliament was scheduled for July 19. It is interesting that the session started with a question from Deputy Dušan Ivančevič: 'Are the security measures around the national parliament well enforced?' This question illustrates the atmosphere in which the main debate on the Concordat began. To understand better why such excitement existed in the national parliament, it is necessary to remember that in the newspaper *Politika* dated July 18, the day before the parliament session, the patriarchate had published the information that the next day, in accordance with the will of the people, there would be a litia and prayers for the health of the patriarch. Neglecting the prohibition from the city government, at about four o'clock in the afternoon on the day of the parliament session, from the Saborna Church a multitude of people burning with almost-forgotten religious passion and holding church banners and gonfalons began a litia led by seventy priests and four bishops. At about six o'clock in the evening when they reached Knez Mikhailova Street, they met a line of policemen. This is how events unfurled…. The gendarmes stopped the litia, asking the people to disperse because the litia was forbidden. Bishop Simeon of Šabats shouted: 'Move away, blasphemers! Do not defile the sacred cross, but let us go on our way in peace! We are not interfering with anyone, we are carrying out a normal church rite in our own country.' And holding the cross more firmly, he began to chant: 'Save, O Lord, Thy people''. He wanted to go on. But there was no way through, the litia faced another line of policemen, who started to hit whomever they could. They seized and tore up church banners, they broke crosses, they pulled the priests by their beards, they tried to strangle them, and they tore their vestments. The most dramatic scene was when a policeman ran out of the line and attacked Bishop Simeon with a heavy rubber truncheon, hitting him and saying: 'Son of a Serbian bitch, move away or I shall pull your beard out!' The bishop continued singing, 'Save, O Lord, Thy people' and went on. Another policeman said: 'I will save you by hitting you'. And two more ran up to accompany him. All three of them attacked the bishop. They hit him everywhere, his mitre fell to the ground, and blood spurted from the bishop's face. Covered with blood and his hair akimbo, he picked up his mitre from the ground, put it on his head and continued. He went on like that, defending himself with the cross, until the policemen hit him with a rifle-butt. He fell unconscious on the ground covered with blood. The people raised him on their hands and took him to the building of the patriarchate. And then a full-scale fight broke out. The priests used gonfalons to protect themselves, and finally started hitting the policemen with them. Eyewitnesses claim that the police had never been as ruthless and merciless towards the citizens. After these incidents black flags were raised over the patriarchate and all the churches in Belgrade, and all the bells were rung. It is not clear whether all the policement who took part in this incident were Catholics, since the minister of internal affairs Korošets was a Catholic priest. The situation was at boiling point, and this simply added fuel to the fire. The leadership of the Serbian Orthodox Church imposed punishments on those who voted for the Concordat. The Holy Hierarchical Council, at its session of July 19, 1937, the same day on which the police brutally broke up the litia, decided to excommunicate all the ministers and representatives of the Orthodox Church who voted for the Concordat, explaining that none of the clergy under any pretext can enter the home of those persons. In addition, it was ordered that the decision had to be proclaimed publicly in all the churches after the first liturgy. It was advised in this document that not only the clergy, but also all other faithful, should not communicate with those who had been punished. In the days following the incidents were repeated. The police hit the citizens with rubber truncheons, even fire-arms were used. One policeman and two citizens were killed in these street riots. In the streets the police were everywhere, they stood guard in front of every church and nobody could enter. Every hour church bells were rung from the church towers.

"The struggle against the Concordat was not restricted to Belgrade. By the end it had spread to most of the country and the people. Kraguyevats, Šabats, Užitse and Malednovats are only some of the cities that supported the struggle against the Concordat. In Malednovats one of the sharpest conflicts took place, in which three people were killed and fifty were seriously wounded. In these conflicts between the spiritual and secular power, many different political parties and groups saw their chance. They joined one or the other side according to their programmes. As a result, in the litia for the health of the patriarch, members of the forbidden communist party of Yugoslavia found their place together with bishops and priests, even though they had nothing in common with the Church and the priesthood. In the meantime, at midnight between the 23rd and 24th of July, Patriarch Barnabas reposed. Censors could not prohibit writing that more than 350,000 people took part in the funeral from all the different parts of the country. Belgrade has never known such a majestic gathering. The day before the parliament had accepted the Concordat, but that didn't mean its final acceptance. The parliament agreed on the text, but it still had to pass through the Senate. The public believed that Patriarch Barnabas, as the main opponent of the Concordat, had been poisoned, and that it was done with the knowledge of Stoyadinovič and his closest co-workers. The peak of national discontent was reached on the day when the press revealed that the patriarch had died on the same night that the parliament majority voted for the Concordat. The government of Stoyadinovič found itself in a very unpleasant situation. The national discontent was augmented by words from the church ambon, and it threatened to become an unstoppable flood. The government tried, with police help, to gather statements from the doctors who were looking after the patriarch's health in order to prove that the stories about his poisoning were false. They hoped in this way to stop the dangerous situation. But the manoeuvre was so obvious that nobody believed it. Professor Igniatovsky, the doctor who had been with the patriarch from the beginning to his death, claimed that it was forcible poisoning. So did Professor Xenophon Šakhovich. After many years, he publicly said: 'I'm declaring this now, because before the war I was not allowed, that Patriarch Barnabas was poisoned! I know because I with my assistants did a post-mortem on the late Patriarch Barnabas, and definitely established that Patriarch Barnabas was poisoned.' The senior medical technician, Miroslav Božovich, witnessed on the contrary that this statement of Professor Šakhovich was not true as regards the post-mortem, because the post-mortem was not carried out, since the government would not allow it. Instead of a post-mortem, from 'the highest place' it was ordered that the patriarch's body be embalmed. The embalming was done during the night, 'in an urgent procedure and in the presence of the police'. Those who initiated it wanted to stop the real truth from being revealed in this way. The results of the judicial enquiry were never revealed, nor was the case of Barnabas' death ever judicially completed. The investigation itself was stopped in April, 1938. One thing was certain: the city government that led the investigation succeeded in proving that the patriarch was not poisoned and that the government was not involved in the poisoning, and gave this finding great publicity. In October the Concordat was officially withdrawn.[277] The government of Stoyadinovič decided that there should be no Concordat – no old one, no new one, no Concordat at all. In addition to this, Stoyadinovič was forced to the wall from one side by the firm position of the Serbian Orthodox Church and on the other side by the firm requests of the Duke's authority to restore good relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church as soon as possible, and in that way he practically accepted all that the persistent hierarchs requested from his government: for example, to punish all those responsible for the terrible events in front of the Sabarna church in Belgrade and other places, without reference to their positions, whether they were ministers or state officials, and other such things. In exchange, in one of the last sessions the Hierarchical Council decided that they would remove the sanctions against the ministers and deputies that voted for the Concordat. Through these decisions both sides put an end to the dispute, which for more than a year had put more wood on the fire of political and religious passions.

"The rejection of the Concordat with the Vatican caused the displeasure and rage of Pope Pius XI, who declared in December, 1937: '… I am convinced that there will not be a small number of souls who will regret not accepting wholeheartedly and with an open mind such a great good as the one which the representative of Jesus Christ offered the country, and not only for the Church and the religious harmony of the nation, but also for the social and political harmony, though we strongly resent the idea that politics should be our business.' This pope's threat very shortly, during the Second World War, came true in the most monstrous way. The pope's revenge for the non-acceptance of the 'great good' of the Concordat, carried out at the hands of the Ustasha, was really horrible.

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[277] Although the Prime Minister did not send the project of the Concordat to the Senate from ratification, he did, in 1939, establish the autonomous province of Croatia with its capital in Zagreb. (V.M.)

“The thirties in the twentieth century on the historical road of the Serbian Church were marked by a firm position of non-acceptance of the new calendar. This didn’t mean that they completely broke communion with the new calendarists. [However,] that wasn’t the case with the Soviet church of Metropolitan Sergius, who was not acknowledged as the canonical ruler of the Russian Orthodox Church. The patriarch-martyr Barnabas offered hospitality to the confessing Russian Church Abroad, and has a very close relationship with her; besides, the Serbian Church in this period had a lot of sympathy and support for the Greek confessors of the Old Calendar, sending them holy chrism almost until the end of the 1950s. If we add to all this the firm and uncompromising struggle against the Concordat, we have to realize how high was the level of the clergy and the people before the war, and how high their awareness and readiness to sacrifice in order to defend the position of the Orthodox Church.”[278]

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[278] Hieroschemamonk Akakije, in V. Moss, *Letopis Velike Bitke* (Chronicle of a Great Battle), Belgrade, 2008, pp. 323-33. However, one problem about the Serbian Church before the war was its failure to administer the sacrament of baptism in the canonical manner, through threefold immersion.

25. SECRET CATACOMB COUNCILS

On November 20, 1937, Metropolitans Joseph and Cyril were shot together in Chimkent. Following on the shooting of Metropolitan Peter on October 10, this meant that all of the holy patriarch's locum tenentes, both "ordinary" and "extraordinary", were now dead… The martyrdom of the last de jure and de facto leaders of the Catacomb Church placed the Russian Church in an unprecedented situation.

Nun Vassa writes: "In connection with the death of the locum tenens of the patriarchal throne, Hieromartyr Peter of Krutitsa, an 'Act on the lawful succession of the title of locum tenens of the Moscow patriarchal throne and the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church after the death of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa' was drawn up at the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR in December, 1937. Recognizing the claims of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) to be unlawful, the Hierarchical Council recognized Metropolitan Cyril as the lawful locum tenens, not knowing that Hieromartyr Cyril had been shot on November 20, 1937. However, in view of the persecutions the Council admitted that it was impossible openly to commemorate Metropolitan Cyril, and decreed: 'To commemorate Metropolitan Cyril as locum tenens of the Moscow patriarchal throne and head of the Russian Church at the proskomedia and in private prayers, but to refrain from proclaiming his name during the Divine services, so as not to draw upon him heavy persecutions on the part of the atheist power of the Bolsheviks. The present act is to be preserved without publication, as a witness to future times concerning the lawful succession of the leadership of the Russian Church.' Instead of openly commemorating Metropolitan Cyril's name, the Council decreed that 'the Orthodox Episcopate of the Russian [Rossijskaia] Church' should be commemorated. However, there is no more detailed explanation of this formula in the protocols of 1937.

"From what has been said we may conclude that at first 'the Orthodox Episcopate of the Russian Church' signified a concrete person, the patriarchal locum tenens Metropolitan Cyril, since his name could not be raised openly. This formula signified at the same time also that the Hierarchical Council did not recognize Metropolitan Sergius to be the head of the Russian Church."[279]

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[279] Nun Vassa, "Ot Vserossijskago Tserkovnago Sobora k Vserossijskomu Tserkovnomu Soboru, ili: Chto takoe 'Pravoslavnoe Episkopstvo Tserkve Rossijskia'?" (From the All-Russian Church Council to the All-Russian Church Council, or : What is 'The Orthodox Episcopate of the Church of Russia' ?), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 13 (1754), July 1/14, 2004, p. 13. She continues: "A somewhat less concrete interpretation of 'the Orthodox Episcopate' can be heard a year later, at the Hierarchical Council in August, 1938. At this Council the question 'of the commemoration of the bishops of the Russian [Rossijskoj] Church' was again raised. In the protocols there is no new decision on the given question, but there is only a remark of Metropolitan Anastasy: '[Concerning] how the bishops of the Russian Church are to be commemorated, [Metropolitan Anastasy] pointed out that in the Eastern Churches during the widowhood of the patriarchal see the 'episcopate' of this Church was commemorated.' It should be pointed out that the Hierarchical Council at this time still did not know about the death of Hieromartyr Cyril. From one letter of Metropolitan Anastasy from October, 1941 it is evident that even by the end of 1941 he did not have reliable information about the fate of Metropolitan Cyril."

And so by the end of 1937, the Church's descent into the catacombs, which had begun in the early 20s, was complete. From now on, with the external administrative machinery of the Church destroyed, it was up to each bishop – sometimes each believer – individually to preserve the fire of faith, being linked with his fellow Christians only through the inner, mystical bonds of the life in Christ. Thus was the premonition of Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene fulfilled: "Perhaps the time has come when the Lord does not wish that the Church should stand as an intermediary between Himself and the believers, but that everyone is called to stand directly before the Lord and himself answer for himself as it was with the forefathers!"[280]

This judgement was supported by ROCOR at its Second All-Emigration Council in 1938: "Since the epoch we have lived through was without doubt an epoch of apostasy, it goes without saying that for the true Church of Christ a period of life in the wilderness, of which the twelfth chapter of the Revelation of St. John speaks, is not, as some may believe, an episode connected exclusively with the last period in the history of mankind. History show us that the Orthodox Church has withdrawn into the wilderness repeatedly, from whence the will of God called her back to the stage of history, where she once again assumed her role under more favourable circumstances. At the end of history the Church of God will go into the wilderness for the last time to receive Him, Who comes to judge the quick and the dead. Thus the twelfth chapter of Revelation must be understood not only in an eschatological sense, but in a historical and educational sense as well: it shows up the general and typical forms of Church life. If the Church of God is destined to live in the wilderness through the Providence of the Almighty Creator, the judgement of history, and the legislation of the proletarian state, it follows clearly that she must forego all attempts to reach a legalization, for every attempt to arrive at a legalization during the epoch of apostasy inescapably turns the Church into the great Babylonian whore of blasphemous atheism. The near future will confirm our opinion and prove that the time has come in which the welfare of the Church demands giving up all legalizations, even those of the parishes. We must follow the example of the Church prior to the Council of Nicaea, when the Christian communities were united not on the basis of the administrative institutions of the State, but through the Holy Spirit alone."[281]

Perhaps the most striking and literal example of the Church's fleeing into the wilderness is provided by Bishop Amphilochius of Yenisei and Krasnoyarsk, who in 1930 departed into the Siberian forests and founded a catacomb skete there in complete isolation from the world. However, the Catacomb Church was still able to issue decrees in this period, such as the following anathema attached to the Order for the Triumph of Orthodoxy in Josephite parishes: "To those who maintain the mindless renovationist heresy of sergianism; to those who teach that the earthly existence of the Church of God can be established by denying the truth of Christ; and to those who affirm that serving the God-fighting authorities and fulfilling their godless commands, which trample on the sacred canons, the patristic traditions and the Divine dogmas, and destroy the whole of Christianity, saves the Church of Christ; and to those who revere the Antichrist and his servants and forerunners, and all his minions, as a lawful power established by God; and to all those… who blaspheme against the new confessors and martyrs (Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Nicholas of Kiev and Alexis of Khutyn), and to… the renovationists and the other heretics – **anathema**."[282]

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[280] E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovedniki,* San Francisco, 1971, p. 92.

[281] Cited by Arfed Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville, 1960, p. 102.

Again, Divine Providence convened a Council of the Catacomb Church in July, 1937, in the depths of Siberia:- "In the last days of July, 1937, in the Siberian town of Ust-Kut, on the River Lena (at its juncture with the River Kut), in the re-grouping section of the house of arrest, there met by chance: two Metropolitans, four Bishops, two Priests and six laymen of the secret Catacomb Church, who were on a stage of their journey from Vitim to Irkutsk, being sent from Irkutsk to the north.

"It was difficult to anticipate a similarly full and representative gathering of same-minded members of the Church in the near future. Therefore those who had gathered decided immediately to open a 'Sacred Council', in order to make canonical regulations concerning vital questions of the Catacomb Church. The time of the Council was, as it seemed, limited to four hours, after which the participants in the Council were sent in different directions.

"The president was Metropolitan John (in one version: "Bishop John"), and the Council chose the layman A.Z. to be secretary. The resolutions of the Council were not signed: A.Z. gave an oath to memorize the decisions of the Council and to pass on to whom it was necessary whatever he remembered exactly, but not to speak at all about what he confused or could not remember exactly. A.Z. in his time succeeded in passing on the memorised decisions of the Church. His words were written down and became Canons of the Church. Among these Canons were some that are especially necessary for the Church:

"1. The Sacred Council forbids the faithful to receive communion from the clergy legalized by the anti-Christian State.

"2. It has been revealed to the Sacred Council by the Spirit that the anathema-curse hurled by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon is valid, and all priests and Church-servers who have dared to consider it as an ecclesiastical mistake or political tactic are placed under its power and bound by it.

"3. To all those who discredit and separate themselves from the Sacred Council of 1917-18 – **Anathema**!

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[282] S. Verin, "Svidetel'stvo russkikh katakomb" (A Witness of the Russian Catacombs), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 14 (1563), July 1/14, 1996, pp. 11-12.

"4. All branches of the Church which are on the common trunk – the trunk is our pre-revolutionary Church – are living branches of the Church of Christ. We give our blessing to common prayer and the serving of the Divine Liturgy to all priests of these branches. The Sacred Council forbids all those who do not consider themselves to be branches, but independent from the tree of the Church, to serve the Divine Liturgy. The Sacred Council does not consider it necessary to have administrative unity of the branches of the Church, but unity of mind concerning the Church is binding on all."[283]

Thus Sergius was to be condemned, not only because he was a usurper of ecclesiastical authority (although he was that), nor because he violated the sacred canons (although he did that), but because he imposed on the Church an heretical attitude towards the antichristian authorities. As Hieromartyr Bishop Mark (Novoselov) said during interrogation: "I am an enemy of Soviet power – and what is more, by dint of my religious convictions, since Soviet power is an atheist power and even anti-theist. I believe that as a true Christian I cannot strengthen this power by any means… [There is] a petition which the Church has commanded to be used everyday in certain well-known conditions… The purpose of this formula is to request the overthrow of the infidel power by God… But this formula does not amount to a summons to believers to take active measures, but only calls them to pray for the overthrow of the power that has fallen away from God."[284]

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[283] Schema-Monk Epiphany (Chernov), personal communication; B. Zakharov (the pseudonym of a Catacomb priest), *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), September 7, 1949; "Vazhnoe postanovlenie katakombnoj tserkvi" (An Important Decree of the Catacomb Church), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 18, 1949. According to one version, there is a fifth canon: "To all those who support the renovationist and sergianist heresy – Anathema". See Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': Ust'-Kutskij Sobor 1937g." (The Catacomb Church: the Ust-Kut Council of 1937), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), № 4 (8), 1997, pp. 20-24.

If we believe in the "Nomadic Council" of 1928, then the Ust-Kut Council may be seen as confirming its sixth cano, which defined the essence of Sergianism as its recognition of Soviet power as a true, God-established power. It also harks back to the seventh canon of that Council, which declared: "The anathema of January 19, 1918 laid by Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Council on the former Christians who became blasphemers, is confirmed. Since Soviet power is a blaspheming and Christ-persecuting power, the action of the anathema very much applies to the God-fighting power, and one must pray not for it, but for the deliverance of people from the bitter torment of the godless authorities and for the suffering land of Russia. We establish the reading of a special prayer for the persecuted and much-suffering Church after the service."(Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': Kochuiushchij Sobor", op. cit., pp. 7-8)

Who could this "Metropolitan John" that presided over this Council be? We don't know the answer to this question. The only Metropolitan John of this period known to the present writer was mentioned by I.M. Andreyev: "In August, 1952 the Catacomb Russian Orthodox Church lost one of her most remarkable archpastors. In view of his death, we are allowed to name him and say a few words about the character of his activity. Metropolitan John (Altajkij) was secretly consecrated by Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan. The reposed metropolitan was abroad after the Second World War and from 1946 to 1951 went several times to Soviet Russia and returned. His rare epistles and reports, communicated to certain catacombniks from Soviet Russia living abroad were, until 1952, the main source abroad on the life [of the Church] in Soviet Russia" ("O Tajnoj (Katakombnoj) tserkvi v Sovietskoj Rossii" (On the Secret (Catacomb) Church in Soviet Russia", *Russkij Sigor*, N 4-6, 2009, p. 21).

[284] Novoselov, quoted in Osipov, op. cit., p. 3.

Again, in another catacomb document dating from the 1960s we read: "Authority is given by God in order to preserve and fulfil the law… But how should one look on the Soviet authority, following the Apostolic teaching on authorities [Romans 13]? In accordance with the Apostolic teaching which we have set forth, one must acknowledge that the Soviet authority is not an authority. It is an anti-authority. It is not an authority because it is not established by God, but insolently created by an aggregation of the evil actions of men, and it is consolidated and supported by these actions. If the evil actions weaken, the Soviet authority, representing a condensation of evil, likewise weakens… This authority consolidates itself in order to destroy all religions, simply to eradicate faith in God. Its essence is warfare with God, because its root is from Satan. The Soviet authority is not authority, because by its nature it cannot fulfill the law, for the essence of its life is evil.

"It may be said that the Soviet authority, in condemning various crimes of men, can still be considered an authority. We do not say that a ruling authority is totally lacking. We only affirm that it is an anti-authority. One must know that the affirmation of real power is bound up with certain actions of men, to whom the instinct of preservation is natural. And they must take into consideration the laws of morality which have been inherent in mankind from ages past. But in essence this authority systematically commits murder physically and spiritually. In reality a hostile power acts, which is called Soviet authority. The enemy strives by cunning to compel humanity to acknowledge this power as an authority. But the Apostolic teaching on authority is inapplicable to it, just as evil is inapplicable to God and the good, because evil is outside God; but the enemies with hypocrisy can take refuge in the well-known saying that everything is from God. This Soviet anti-authority is precisely the collective Antichrist, warfare against God…"[285]

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[285] Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, pp. 541-42. Cf. Archbishop Averky, "Mir nevidimij – sily bezplotnie" (The Invisible World – the Bodiless Powers), *Slova i rechi* (Sermons and Speeches), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1975, vol. 2, pp. 593-95; Metropolitan Innocent, "O Sovietskoj Vlasti" (On Soviet Power), in Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie mitropolita Antonia*, op. cit., pp. 168-172.

26. ROCOR'S SECOND ALL-DIASPORA COUNCIL

On October 30, 1935 Fr. Sergius Bulgakov's teaching on Sophia was condemned as heretical by ROCOR's Hierarchical Council. This decision would seem to have precluded any reconciliation between ROCOR and Metropolitan Evlogy, who continued to shelter the heretic. Moreover, ROCOR's condemnation of Masonry, which financially supported Eulogius, emphasised the now very wide chasm between the two parties.[286] However, in November, 1935 Patriarch Barnabas of Serbia succeeded in bringing together the separated parts of the Russian Church in a special meeting in Belgrade.[287] Metropolitan Evlogy took part, together with Metropolitan Theophilus of the North American diocese, which had also separated from ROCOR.[288]

The American schism, writes Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov, "began in 1923 with the refusal of Metropolitan Plato, who was ruling the Aleut and North American diocese, to submit to the decision of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to appoint Archbishop Alexander to his diocese as financial auditor. On January 16, 1924, by ukaz no. 28, Patriarch Tikhon removed Metropolitan Plato and summoned him to Moscow. In reply Metropolitan Plato began to seek autocephalous status. On March 20, 1924 a 'council' was convened in Detroit at which, contrary to the rules of the Church, a protopriest presided, and not a ruling bishop. The 'council' decreed: '… to declare the Russian Orthodox Diocese in America a self-governing church…'

"In 1933 Metropolitan Plato declared the American Church to be an autonomous 'Russian Orthodox Greek-Catholic Church of America', the so- called American Metropolia. In 1934 he died, being under ban from the Moscow Patriarchate and the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR."[289]

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[286] The Mason K.V. Gvozdanovich recalls that while "the Carlovtsy group thundered against Masonry from the ambon, the clergy… headed by the all-embracing Metropolitan Evlogy were tolerant of it, allowing us to go to confession and communion" (Zhukov, op. cit., p. 123).

[287] Andrei Psarev writes: "In 1934 in Belgrade, after Metropolitans Anthony and Evlogii settled their differences, zealous enforcers of ROCOR church policies refused to allow Metropolitan Evlogii, who had been defrocked by ROCOR, to serve at the Russian Trinity Church in Belgrade. As a result, Patriarch Varnava appeared at a meeting of the ROCOR council of bishops being held at the time and stated that if all suspensions imposed by ROCOR were not lifted immediately, King Alexander would no longer extend his hospitality to Russian bishops." ("The Development of Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia's Attitude Toward Other Local Orthodox Churches"), http://www.sobor2006.com/printerfriendly2.php?id=119_0_3_0, p. 2.

[288] See G.M. Soldatov, "Soveschanie Glav RPTsZ pod predsed. Sviat. Patriarkha Varvary, 1935 g. Arkhiv Dokumentov" (The Conference of the Heads of the ROCOR under the presidency of Patriarch Barnabas, 1935. Archive of Documents), http://www.catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=737.

[289] Zhukov, op. cit., p. 107, footnote 57. For a more detailed account, see *A History of the Russian Church Abroad and the Events leading to the American Metropolia's Autocephaly*, Seattle, WA: St. Nectarios Press, 1972, chapters 2 and 3.

Reconciliation between ROCOR, the West European Metropolia and the American Metropolia was achieved, and when Metropolitan Evlogy signed the new Temporary Statute of ROCOR, which allowed the Synod to place bishops in the autonomous regions, one of which was Western Europe, all the sanctions against him were removed. Moreover, in a special resolution the ROCOR Council of Bishops declared that all the Mysteries performed by Metropolitan Evlogy in the period of his separation had been invalid, as if the previous declarations of lack of grace had never taken place (yako ne byvshii).[290]

However, Evlogy said that "as before, I did not feel genuine, sincere peace between us, and did not believe that the 'Temporary Statute', which had been hastily and with great difficulty composed by us, could unite us all…"[291] He retracted neither his sophianist heresy nor his Masonic contacts. Nor was he asked to break his links with the Ecumenical Patriarch, whose exarch in Western Europe he now was (and who had blessed his trip to Yugoslavia[292]). And so in June, 1936 a diocesan assembly convened by Evlogy rejected the "Temporary Statute" agreed on in Yugoslavia.[293] As he wrote to the Ecumenical Patriarch: "Our bishops for some reason want to tear me away from the jurisdiction of Your Holiness, but I and my flock did not agree to that, for we see in your fatherly protection the only strong defence of our canonical existence.[294]

On July 10, 1936, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) died. Metropolitan Evlogy was invited to the Hierarchical Council that took place in September, at which Archbishop Anastasy was elected metropolitan, but declined. The Council recognized that the new order for the administration of ROCOR could not be realized because of Metropolitan Evlogy's rejection of it. But it rejected Eulogius' reference to "the will of the people", saying that the will of the people in Paris had undoubtedly been influenced by the report of the diocesan council and the prior speech of Evlogy himself. The Council voted to continue to seek for ways of reconciliation with Evlogy, but declared that the unity of ROCOR could be achieved only if Metropolitan Evlogy came out of the orbit of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Temporary Statute was confirmed, and concerning Fr. Sergius Bulgakov it was resolved that the Autocephalous Churches should be informed that his Sophianist teaching had been recognized to be a heresy.[295]

On August 14, 1938 an All-Diaspora Council of ROCOR consisting of 13 bishops, 26 priests and 58 laymen was convened. Bishop John (Maximovich) of Shanghai said, in his report "The Situation of the Orthodox Church after the War": "We (the faithful of the Russian Church Abroad) must firmly stand on the ground of the Church canons and not be with those who depart from them. Formerly, in order to reproach canonical irregularities in a Local Church, canonical communion with her was broken. The Russian Church Abroad cannot act in this way since her position has not been completely determined. For that reason she must not break communion with other Churches if they do not take this step first. But, while maintaining communion, she must not be silent about violations of Church truth…"[296]

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[290] Archpriest Alexander Lebedev, "Re: the debate on grace – a bit more historical perspective", orthodox_synod@indiana.edu, May 5, 1998.
[291] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 53.
[292] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 49-51.
[293] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 56-57.
[294] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 53.
[295] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 57-58.

This "liberal" position was followed by a still more liberal declaration. Protocol number 8 for August 16 stated: "Judgement was made concerning concelebrations with clergy belonging to the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod. Metropolitan Anastasy pointed out that clergy coming from Russia from the named jurisdiction were immediately admitted to communion in prayer, and cited the opinion of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan in his epistle published in *Church Life* to the effect that the sin of Metropolitan Sergius did not extend to the clergy subject to him. It was decreed: to recognize that there is no obstacle to communion in prayer and concelebration with the clergy of Metropolitan Sergius."[297]

Nun Vassa: "In this section, Metropolitan Anastasy gives little argument for his position, referring only to the opinion of Holy Martyr Metropolitan Kirill… The very fact of Metropolitan Anastasy's unity of mind with Metropolitan Kirill in this ecclesiastical question is very interesting for us. For the foundation of his ecclesiastical position of St Cyril was not the letter of the law, but the real meaning of the Holy Canons constructive for the Church, opposing his understanding to the formalism of Metropolitan Sergius."[298]

However, there are several problems with Nun Vassa's interpretation here. First, as we have seen, Metropolitan Cyril never expressed the view that "there are no obstacles to prayerful communion and concelebration with clergymen of Metropolitan Sergius". On the contrary, in his earliest epistle, that of 1929, he wrote: "I acknowledge it as a fulfillment of our archpastoral duty for those Archpastors and all who consider the establishment of the so-called 'Temporary Patriarchal Synod' as wrong, to refrain from communion with Metropolitan Sergius and those Archpastors who are of one mind with him." Nor did he ever declare that while it was wrong to have communion with the Sergianist bishops, it was alright to have communion with their priests – which would have been canonical nonsense in any case. True, he refrained – at that time – from declaring the Sergianists to be graceless. However, he *did* say, in his epistle of 1934, that Christians who partook of the Sergianist sacraments knowing of Sergius' usurpation of power and the illegality of his Synod would receive them *to their condemnation* – a point for all those contemplating union with the MP today to consider very carefully…

Moreover, we now know (as Metropolitan Anastasy did not know, but Nun Vassa surely does) that by 1937 Metropolitan Cyril's position had hardened considerably: "The expectations that Metropolitan Sergius would correct himself have not been justified, but *there has been enough time for the formerly ignorant members of the Church, enough incentive and enough opportunity to investigate what has happened*; and very many have both investigated and understood that *Metropolitan Sergius is departing from that Orthodox Church which the Holy Patriarch Tikhon entrusted to us to guard, and consequently there can be no part or lot with him for the Orthodox*. The recent events have finally made clear the *renovationist* [that is, *heretical*] nature of Sergianism…" That Metropolitan Anastasy did not know the true position of Metropolitan Cyril, not to mention the position of a whole series of other Catacomb hierarchs and martyrs, indicates a growing difference in outlook between the True Russian Church inside and outside Russia.

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[296] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 75.
[297] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 75.
[298] Nun Vassa, op. cit.

The 1938 Council also discussed the Church's participation in the ecumenical movement, and here for the first time doubts began to be expressed about this participation. ROCOR had sent representatives to ecumenical conferences in Lausanne, Edinburgh and Oxford, and in his report Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) defending this position, saying that the Orthodox had always expounded and defended the sacred dogmas. "Therefore the Orthodox delegates both in Lausanne and in Edinburgh considered it their duty to give and publish special declarations; in this way they clearly marked the Orthodox Church off from other confessions calling themselves 'churches'… We must disperse all perplexities and ideas about Orthodoxy that are often simply caricatures… To be reconciled with the existing situation of alienation of the larger part of the Christian world from the Orthodox Church, and an indifferent attitude towards the ecumenical seeking of the unity of the Church, would be an unforgiveable sin, for we must bear responsibility for the destiny of thoese who still remain beyond the boundaries of the Church and for the future destiny of the whole of the Christian world… But while participating in the ecumenical movement, we must beware of concessions and condescension, for this is extremely harmful and dangerous, and confirms the heterodox in the conviction that they are membes of the true Church. In the sphere of dogmatics and other essential and basic questions we cannot diminish our demands…"

Bishop Seraphim's position was supported by Metropolitan Anastasy and Count George Grabbe.

However, others took a more "rightist" position. Thus N.F. Stefanov read a report on the influence of Masonry on the Oxford conference. And Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) said: "Extra-ecclesiastical unity brings nothing but harm. Orthodox Truth is expressed in the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is precisely what the ecumenical movement does not want to know… Unity can take place only on the ground of grace-filled life. The aims of the ecumenical movement are unattainable. 'Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the council of the ungodly.'"

Metropolitan Anastasy said: "We have to choose between two dangers – a temptation or a refusal to engage in missionary work in the confession of Orthodoxy. Which danger is greater? We shall proceed from our premises. The grace-filled Church must carry out missionary work, for in this way it is possible to save some of those who waver. Beside the leaders who want to disfigure Orthodoxy, there are others, for example the young, who come to conferences with true seeking. Comparing that which they see and hear from their own pastors and from the Orthodox pastor, they will understand the truth. Otherwise they will remain alone. I have heard positive reviews from heterodox of Bishop Seraphim's speeches at conferences. We must also take into account that the Anglo-Saxon world is in crisis, and is seeking the truth. Protestantism is also seeking support for itself. Moreover, we have a tradition of participating in such conferences that was established by the reposed Metropolitan Anthony. To avoid temptation we must clarify the essence of the matter."

A resolution was passed that ROCOR members should not take part in the ecumenical movement. However, for the sake of missionary aims, bishops could instruct their representatives to attend conferences and explain without compromise the teaching of the Orthodox Church, without allowing the slightest deviation from the Orthodox point of view.[299] In 1938 Archbishop Nestor of Kamchatka, who was at the ROCOR mission in Ceylon, asked Metropolitan Anastasy whether he could receive Anglican clergy and laity through confession (13 clergy expressed the desire to join Orthodoxy), which would make their joining much easier. An ukaz of the Synod dated January 4, 1939 was sent to the archbishop, which said that in view of the fact "that there is no definite resolution of the whole Orthodox Church with regard to the question of receiving Anglican clergy in their existing orders, it should be recognized that allowing this in a positive sense would exceed the competency of the Hierarchical Synod". So Anglican clergy were to continue to be received as before, through ordination.[300]

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[299] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 75-77.

[300] Andrew Psarev, "RPTsZ i ekumenicheskoe dvizhenie 1920-1948 gg. (ROCOR and the ecumenical movement, 1920-1948)"; in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 77-78.

27. ARCHBISHOP THEOPHAN OF POLTAVA

In 1931, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, perhaps the greatest theologian of the Russian Church in the twentieth century, departed from active service in ROCOR to live as a hermit in France. His departure was probably caused by his disagreements with Metropolitan Anthony on a number of issues. Thus in his handwritten note dated February 16/29, 1932 he listed the following "uncanonical actions of Metropolitan Anthony":

"1. Patriarch Tikhon and the Councils abroad [zagranichnie sobory] did not recognize and do not recognize the autocephaly of the Polish Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Anthony recognizes it.[301]

"2. The Councils abroad condemned the introduction of the new style in the Finnish Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Anthony at first blessed the introduction of the new style there, but then condemned it. By this behaviour he greatly contributed to the arising of the disturbances in the Finnish Orthodox Church.

"3. Both the previous Russian ecclesiastical authority and the Councils abroad did not recognize the 'schism' of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in relation to the Greek. Metropolitan Anthony stubbornly recognizes it.

"4. The Councils abroad decreed that no intervention should be made in the affairs of the Orthodox Carpatho-Russian and Czech Churches in Czechoslovakia, but that the ordering of the affairs of those Churches should be given over to the Serbian ecclesiastical authorities until the restoration of normal life in Russia. Metropolitan Anthony has often interfered in these affairs, crudely violating the decisions of the councils, thereby inciting the Czech government against him and in part also the Serbian ecclesiastical authorities.

"5. The Councils condemned the so-called 'Young Men's Christian Association' (YMCA) as being harmful for Russian youth. Metropolitan Anthony often blessed this movement as being in the highest degree useful.

"6. The Councils also condemned the 'theological institute' in Paris, which was founded by Metropolitan Eulogius on his own initiative. Metropolitan Anthony blessed the founding of this institute and even read lectures there.

"7. The Councils decreed that there should be an administrative separation from

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[301] On November 3, 1925 Metropolitan Anthony concelebrated with Metropolitan Dionysius of Warsaw in the Russian embassy church in Bucharest. The new calendarist Romanian Patriarch Miron also came to the service (Zhukov, op. cit., p. 88). (V.M.)

Metropolitan Sergius for his agreement with Soviet power and that all communion with him should be cut off. Metropolitan Anthony, paying no attention to this decree, is in communion with Metropolitan Sergius.

"8. Under the influence of objections made, Metropolitan Anthony was about to take back his *Catechism*, which had been introduced by him into school use instead of the *Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret. But, as was revealed shortly, he did this insincerely and insistently continues to distribute his incorrect teaching *On Redemption* and many other incorrect teachings included in his *Catechism*.

"9. At one of the Councils he tried to prove the complete admissibility for a Christian and for a hierarch of becoming a member of a masonic organization as far as the 18th degree of Masonry!"[302]

However, these disagreements of Archbishop Theophan with Metropolitan Anthony did not lead to his formally breaking relations with the Church Abroad, for the newspapers reported that he concelebrated with Archbishop Seraphim (Lukianov) of Paris, and gave sermons.

Certainly he was unhappy about the state of the Churches, and perhaps felt that he with his uncompromising views could make no further contribution to public Church life. Thus on September 12, 1931 he wrote from Clamart: "You complain about developments in ecclesiastical affairs in your country. I do not know the details of your situation, but I think that the religious and moral state of other Orthodox countries is no better, perhaps even worse. I can at least state with assurance that this is true both of Russia under the yoke and of Russia in the Diaspora. Regarding ecclesiastical matters there, I have an enormous amount of material at my disposal: approximately 700 pages in all. I have at my disposal materials about ecclesiastical affairs here as well which are no less important or voluminous. The overall conclusion that can be drawn from these materials is horrifying. Yet there is, of course, amid this general darkness a 'grace-filled remnant' that still perpetuates the Orthodox faith both here and there. 'Our times seem to be apocalyptic. *The salt is losing its savour.* Among the Church's highest pastors there remains a weak, dim, contradictory and incorrect understanding of the written word. This is subverting spiritual life in Christian society and destroying Christianity, which consists of *actions, not words. It grieves me to see to whom Christ's sheep have been entrusted, to see who it is that oversees their guidance and salvation.* But this is tolerated by God. Let those in Judaea flee to the mountains!' With these words the great Russian hierarchs Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow and Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov characterized the state of ecclesiastical affairs in their own times, sixty years ago. Do we not have even greater reason to repeat these threatening words at the present time?"

The great archbishop's letters were becoming increasingly apocalyptic in tone.

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[302] In 1933, perhaps in reaction to these criticisms, the ROCOR Synod under the presidency of Metropolitan Anthony formally condemned Masonry.

Already in 1931 he predicted a new war in Europe. And "Czechoslovakia will be the first to succumb to this threat!", he added prophetically. Again, on April 31, 1936 he wrote: "Have you noticed what is happening in the world today? The leaders of the world's governments are all doing the same thing: they all speak about world *peace*. The leaders of France and of states friendly to her are also very insistent in speaking about ways to guarantee *security*, as if this were the essential precondition of this 'peace'. One cannot help but recall the words of the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Thessalonians: 'The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say peace and security, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape' (I Thessalonians 5.3). Everybody who loves the Truth must not only take note of the signs of the times, but also follow these observations to their logical conclusion.

"Regarding the affairs of the Church, in the words of the Saviour, one of the most awesome phenomena of the last days is that at that time 'the *stars* shall fall from heaven' (Matthew 24.29). According to the Saviour's own explanation, these 'stars' are *the Angels of the Churches*, in other words, *the Bishops* (Revelation 1.20). The religious and moral fall of the Bishops is, therefore, one of the most characteristic signs of the last days. The fall of the Bishops is particularly horrifying when they deviate from the doctrines of the faith, or, as the Apostle put it, when they 'would pervert the Gospel of Christ' (Galatians 1.7). The Apostle orders that such people be pronounced '*anathema*'. He said, '*If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed (anathema)*' (Galatians 1.9). And one must not be slow about this, for he continues, '*A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, being condemned of himself*' (Titus 3.10-11). Moreover, you may be subject to God's judgement if you are indifferent to deviation from the truth: 'So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold not hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth' (Revelation 3.6).

"Clouds are gathering on the world's horizon. God's judgement of its peoples and of hypocritical Christians, beginning with heretics and lukewarm hierarchs, is approaching."

Archbishop Theophan reposed peacefully on February 19, 1940, in a cave where he spent the last years of his life. There were no more than four people present at the funeral of the hierarch, who was vested in his hierarchical vestments with the mitre and panagia that the Tsar had presented him with at his consecration. The funeral of the great theologian, ascetic and wonderworker was celebrated by Hieromonk Barnabas, his confessor, who lived in the same village. His effects, including a priceless interpretation of the Apocalypse, were stolen and taken to Moscow. Miracles were recorded after his repose. To this day, this great confessor against almost all the major heresies of the twentieth century remains largely unrecognized, and it must be one of the tasks of the Russian Church of the future to give him the recognition and veneration that he so clearly deserves…

28. ROCOR IN GERMANY

The 1935 ROCOR's Hierarchical Council approved a "Statute on the Orthodox Diocese of Berlin and Germany" which had been worked out in the ministry of ecclesiastical affairs of the Third Reich. This Statute envisaged the following demands: the agreement of the government on appointing the head of the diocese of Berlin and Germany; the agreement of the local State organs in the appointment to a parish of a priest "who is a foreigner or without citizenship", which affected almost all the clergy of ROCOR in Germany; and in the appointment by a bishop of members of the diocesan council and when forming new parishes or accepting old ones into the diocese.[303]

On February 14, 1936 the German government began to help ROCOR, seeing it was now a State-recognized institution: the German clergy of ROCOR began to receive regular salaries; subsidies were granted for various needs of the German diocese and its parishes; and the clergy and the diocese received various privileges.[304] On February 25, 1938 Hitler signed a law "On the land-ownership of the Russian Orthodox Church in Germany", according to which "the State in the person of the minister of ecclesiastical affairs received the right to dispose of the Russian ecclesiastical property in the country and in the territories joined to it." On the basis of this law the German State handed over all the pre-revolutionary property of the Russian Church in Germany into the possession of ROCOR, besides the church in Dresden.[305]

However, it did not do this immediately. As Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris writes in his *Memoirs* (p. 648), for some time the government still retained parishes in Berlin, in Eastern Prussia and in Dresden. But on May 5, 1939 the law was extended to Dresden and the Sudetenland.

Why was the German government so favourably disposed to ROCOR? Part of the answer may lie in the fact that the authorities had a negative opinion of the Paris jurisdiction of Metropolitan Evlogy because of its links with the YMCA and other internationalist and Masonic organizations, and were therefore more favourably disposed to ROCOR, which had broken links with the Evlogians. Also, some of the churches in their possession had been built with the participation of German royalty who had family links with the House of the Romanovs, and ROCOR was, of course, the Orthodox jurisdiction with the closest links with the Romanovs. Perhaps also they were hoping in this way to elicit the sympathy of the Balkan Slavic peoples towards Germany.[306]

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[303] A.K. Nikitin, *Polozhenie russkoj pravoslavnoj obschiny v Germanii v period natsistskogo rezhima (1933- 1945)* (The Position of the Russian Orthodox Community in Germany in the Nazi Period (1933-1945)), annual theological conference PSTBI, Moscow, 1998, pp. 321-322; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, pp. 52-53.

[304] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 55.

[305] A.K. Nikitin, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm, part 2, p.71.

[306] G.M. Soldatov, personal communication, March 19, 2006.

In 1938 Hitler gave ROCOR a plot of land in Berlin to build a church, for which Metropolitan Anastasy thanked him. This formed the basis for "Patriarch" Alexis of Moscow to accuse him of sympathy for fascism, an accusation which has been repeated many times since then. The truth of the matter was explained by Metropolitan Anastasy himself in October, 1945 as follows: "Soon after his coming to power Hitler learned that the Russian Orthdoox people in Berlin did not have a church of their own after the church built by them had been removed from the parish because they could not pay the debts they had incurred for it. This led immediately to order the release of considerable sums of money for the building of a new Orthodox church on a beautiful plot of land set aside for this in the German capital. We should note that Hitler took this step without any deliberate request on the part of the Russian Orthodox community and did not attach any conditions to his offering that might have been compensation for it. The Hierarchical Synod as well as the whole of Russia Abroad could not fail to value this magnanimous act, which came at a time when Orthodox churches and monasteries were being mercilessly closed, destroyed or used for completely unsuitable purposes (they were being turned into clubs, cinemas, atheist museums, food warehouses, etc.), and other holy things in Russia were being mocked or defiled. This fact was noted in the address [given by the metropolitan], but the Synod of course gave no 'blessing to destroy and conquer Russia'."[307]

In fact, according to Bishop Gregory Grabbe, the address sent to Hitler was not composed by Metropolitan Anastasy, but by the president of the Russian colony in Berlin, General Biskupsky. When it was shown to the metropolitan, he found it too "flowery". But it had already been sent to the ministry of the interior, and it was too late to compose a new, more moderate variant.[308]

After the German annexation of Czechia and Moravia in March, 1939, the Germans tried to put all the Orthodox there in the jurisdiction of Archbishop Seraphim (Lyade). On November 3, Seraphim concluded an agreement with the Eulogian Bishop Sergius of Prague whereby his parishes were transferred, from a purely juridical point of view, into the jurisdiction of Archbishop Seraphim, but retained their real independence and submission to Metropolitan Evlogy.[309]

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[307] Poslanie k russkim pravoslavnym liudiam po povodu 'Obraschenia patriarkha Aleksia k arkipastyriam i kliru tak nazyvaemoj Karlovatskoj orientatsii' (Epistle to the Russian Orthodox people on the 'Address of Patriarch Alexis to the archpastors and clergy of the so-called Karlovtsy orientation), in G.M. Soldatov, *Arkhierejskij Sobor Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej, Miunkhen (Germania) 1946 g.* (The Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at Munich in 1946), Minneapolis, 2003, p. 13.

[308] Soldatov, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

[309] M. Nazarov, *Missia russkoj emigratsii* (The Mission of the Russian Emigration), Moscow, 1994, vol. 1, p. 266; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 5; M.V. Shkarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Church Emigration), St. Petersburg, 2009.

The parishes of the Serbian Bishop Vladimir (Raich) in Transcarpathia and Slovakia also passed into Seraphim's jurisdiction after Vladimir was detained by the Hungarian authorities (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 1).

The influence of Archbishop (later Metropolitan) Seraphim in the German government was to prove useful again. On November 4, 1940 the Eulogian Archbishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) of Brussels was arrested after the liturgy and imprisoned as “enemy № 2” in Aachen. From there he was transferred to a prison in Berlin. It was Archbishop Seraphim who rescued Archbishop Alexander from prison and settled him at the Russian church in Tegel, where he remained until the end of the war.[310]

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[310] M.V. Shkarovsky, in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 14-15.

29. THE RUSSIAN BORDERLANDS

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 brought still more Orthodox into the Soviet maw. "Hitler's deal with Stalin," writes Nathanael Davis, "allowed the Soviet to occupy eastern Poland, and 1,200 Orthodox parishes [with a theological seminary in Kremenets] were incorporated into the Soviet Union as a result. Then, in June of 1940, the Soviets occupied Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, among whose 6 million people were almost half a million traditionally Orthodox persons who worshiped in about 300 Orthodox churches. Later in the same month the Soviets compelled the Romanians to cede Bessarabia and northern Bukovina with their 4 million people, 3 million of them traditionally Orthodox. There were between 2,000 and 2,500 parishes in these formerly Romanian lands. These annexations brought the Russian Orthodox Church more than 6 million traditionally Orthodox people and 3,500-4,000 churches with active priests, as well as many monasteries and nunneries, some bishops and seminaries, and other resources. The institutional strength of the church must have increased fifteenfold."[311]

A year later, however, these annexations brought Romania voluntarily into the Axis camp. The official church even declared a kind of crusade against Bolshevik Russia. Thus the Orthodox metropolitan of Moldavia declared that God had "had mercy on them [the inhabitants of the Soviet-occupied provinces] and sent his archangels on earth: Hitler,

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[311] Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003, p. 15. Ernest Latham writes that on June 26, 1940, Molotov, "acting on the secret annex to the Nazi-Soviet Pact, handed the Romanian minister in Moscow, Gh. Davidescu, a note with a map demanding the return forthwith of Bessarabia and the cession of the northern half of Bucovina, which Russia had never before ruled. On the advice of Germany and Italy, with Hungary and Bulgaria clamoring for their own irredentae, Romania submitted to the Soviet demands and endured the loss of 50, 762 sq. km. and 3,776,000 people, more than half of whom, some 2,020,000, were ethnic Romanians. The following August 19 negotiations with Bulgaria began to determine the fate of the Quadrilateral, which was returned to Bulgaria on September 7 with the Treaty of Craiova at a cost to Romania of 7412 sq. km. An exchange of populations ensued with 103,711 Romanians transferred north and 62,272 Bulgarians moved south. The most painful and humiliating loss, however, had occurred a week before in Vienna when Hitler determined that northern Transylvania should be ceded to Hungary. The Vienna Diktat cost Romania 42,243 sq. km and 2,600,000 people about half of whom were ethnic Romanians. 110,000 Romanian refugees fled from Transylvania to the kingdom adding their care to the other responsibilities of the Romanian social services already buckling under the weight of the 45,000 Polish refugees who had fled from war-torn Poland the previous year. The total Romanian losses in the summer of 1940 were awesome: one-third of her territory, 6.600,000 of her population including 3,000,000 ethnic Romanians, 37% of the arable land, 44% of the forests, 27% of the orchards, 37% of the vineyards, 37% of wheat acreage, 30% of corn acreage, 75% of sunflower acreage, 43% of hemp acreage and 86% of soya acreage.

"September 1940 was arguable the nadir of Romania's history… Onto the anti-cusp of this nadir on September 5, 1940, there stepped General Ion Antonescu, called by Carol II from house arrest in the face of widespread rioting and a pending total breakdown of law and orderly governance. The following day he demanded and got the abdication of Carol in all but name, and Mihai for the second time became king of Romania…" (*Romanian Nationalism during the Reign of King Mihai I*, Etna, Ca.: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2010, pp. 10-11).

Antonescu and [Finland's] Mannerheim, and they headed their armies with the sign of the cross on their chests and in their hearts a war against the Great Dragon, red as fire, and they defeated him, chased him in chains , and the synagogue of Satan was ruined and scattered in the four directions of the earth and in their place they erected a sacred altar to the God of peace."[312]

Patriarch Nicodemus of Romania showed that the anti-semitic religiosity of the Iron Guard had penetrated deep into his church's consciousness: "God has shown to the leader of our country the path toward a sacred and redeeming alliance with the German nation and sent the united armies to the Divine Crusade against destructive Bolshevism… the Bolshevist Dragon… has found here also villainous souls ready to serve him. Let us bless God that these companions of Satan have been found mostly among the sons of the aliens [the Jews], among the nation that had brought damnation upon itself and its sons, since it had crucified the Son of God. If by their side there had also been some Romanian outcasts, then their blood was certainly not pure Romanian blood, yet mixed with damned blood. These servants of the Devil and Bolshevism, seeing that their master, the monster called Bolshevist Russia, will soon be destroyed, are now trying to help him… they disseminate among our people all sorts of bade new words."[313]

Another Orthodox territory occupied by the Soviets in 1939 was Eastern Poland. V.I. Alexeyev and F. Stavrou write: "Usually Soviet border zones were very thoroughly communised. The churches there were closed. When a part of Poland became Soviet territory and a border zone, Soviet power was forced to review its usual policy. It was too risky to start large-scale religious persecutions and arouse the displeasure of the populace in the presence of the German army on the other side of the border. It was necessary to take into account the fact – which was beneficial in the given circumstances for Soviet power – of the Polish authorities' discrimination against the Orthodox Church. Before the beginning of the Second World War the Poles had closed hundreds of Orthodox churches on their territory on the grounds that the Tsarist government had in 1875 returned theses churches from the unia to Orthodoxy. The Polish government considered the return of the uniates to Orthodoxy an act of violence, and they in their own way restored justice by means of violence, which, needless to say, elicited protests even from the Catholic and Uniate churches.

"The results of these measures of the Polish government were such that, for example, in the region of Kholm out of 393 Orthodox churches existing in 1914, by 1938 there remained 227, by 1939 – 176, and by the beginning of the war – 53 in all.[314] Particularly disturbing was the fact that, of the cult buildings taken away from the Orthodox, 130 churches, 10 houses of prayer and 2 monasteries were simply destroyed.

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[312] Burleigh, op. cit., pp. 271-272.

[313] Burleigh, op. cit., pp. 272-273.

[314] According to Monk Benjamin (op. cit., part 2, p. 73), in June and July of 1938 150 village churches visited by Ukrainian Orthodox were demolished. On July 16 the Polish Church issued a memorandum on the event, as did the MP on the same day. For further details of the persecution, see Danilushkin, M.B (ed.) *Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Russian Orthodox Church), St. Petersburg: "Voskresenie", 1997, vol. I, p. 588; K.N. Nikolaiev, "'Unia' i vostochnij obriad" (The 'Unia' and the Eastern Rite), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 6 (1411), March 15/28, 1990. Among the buildings destroyed

"Naturally, such measures elicited the displeasure of the Orthodox population of Poland and created good soil for Communist propaganda and the growth of sympathy towards the USSR. In these conditions it was particularly difficult for the Soviet government in 1939 to begin large-scale persecutions and close the churches which had not yet been closed by the Poles. It preferred a more cautious policy: the submission of the Orthodox hierarchy and the Orthodox parishes of what used to be Poland to the Moscow Patriarchate, which was well controlled by the government. In other words, this was the first occasion on which the Soviet government used the Moscow Patriarchate for the spread of its influence over newly acquired territory. Thus it did not suit Stalin to snuff out the Moscow Patriarchate at this time!"[315]

However, it was difficult for the wolf to look like a sheep for long; so while it suited Stalin temporarily to play the part of defender of Orthodoxy against Catholicism, it was not long before the familiar pattern re-emerged. Thus all church property in the newly-occupied territories was nationalized in October, 1939; heavy taxes were laid on the clergy, the seminary in Kremenets was closed, and Archbishop Alexis (Gromadsky) of Kremenets was arrested. By June, 1941, 53 priests had been arrested, of whom 37 disappeared and 6 were shot; and the monks at the famous Pochaev Lavra had been reduced from 300 to 80. Two Soviet monks were imported into the monastery to see that

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was the cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky (in 1927), and the Orthodox cathedrals in Liublin, Kalisha, Vlotslavka, Plotsk and Koltsy (Monk Benjamin, part 1, op. cit., p. 175). (V.M.)

[315] Alexeyev and Stavrou, "Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Okkupirovannoj Nemtsami Territorii" (The Russian Orthodox Church on German-Occupied Territory), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1980 (IV), № 12, pp. 122-124.

The persecution of Orthodoxy by the Poles continued well into the war. Thus in Turkovichi in Kholm region there had been for centuries the miraculous Turkovitskaya Icon of the Mother of God cared for by a convent of nuns. In 1915 the nuns were forced to flee to Moscow, and the icon perished during the revolution. Meanwhile, in 1918, writes Archbishop Athanasius, "the Poles occupied the monastery and turned it into an orphanage under the direction of Polish nuns. The Orthodox were strictly forbidden to enter the monastery. Upon return from exile, the Orthodox inhabitants of Turkovichi built with their own means a small chapel in the cemetery not far from the monastery and ordered from the local artist and iconographer, Zinya, a copy of the miraculous icon, adorning it with a large kiot (shrine) and placing it in the church. The people heard of this and began to make massive pilgrimages to Turkovichi in order to venerate the sacred 'Turkovitskaya' Icon as one equal to the original. Thus the feast day of Turkovichi was restored and drew numerous pilgrims on the July 2/15 date.

"But the wheel of fate turned mercilessly for Turkovichi and Kholm. During the terrible years of 1943-1945 during the Second World War Polish bandits attacked the peaceful Orthodox inhabitants at night, slaughtered them, burned their homes, and brought a reign of terror and fear to these Orthodox people. In this tragedy hundreds of thousands of Orthodox people who inhabited the four districts of Grubeshovsky, Tomashevsky, Zamoisky, and Bielgoraisky perished at the hands of the Poles." ("The Tragedy of Orthodoxy in Kholm: Eternal be its memory!", *Orthodox Life,* vol. 34, № 1 (January-February, 1984), pp. 34-35. Translated by Timothy Fisher from *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 14, 1983, p. 9) the remainder stayed loyal to Soviet power.

The acceptance of the bishops in these areas took place in Moscow "through reading the corresponding prayer for unification, confession and joint participation in the Divine Liturgy"[316] Archbishop Theodosius (Theodosiev) of Lithuania for the Polish Autocephaly repented before the MP, and was accepted in his existing orders but in retirement. His Lithuanian see was transferred to Metropolitan Eleutherius (Bogoyavlensky).[317] Archbishop Alexis was received in June, 1940, but was given only a few parishes in the Kremenets area. Bishops Anthony (Martsenko) of Kamen-Kashira and Simon of Ostrog were received on August 21, 1940.

Archbishop Panteleimon (Rozhnevsky), formerly of Pinsk, was living in exile in the Zhirovitsky monastery for refusing to accept the Polish autocephaly. After the Soviet takeover, he petitioned the MP for him and his clergy to be received into the MP and for him to be appointed ruling bishop of Pinsk and Novgorod. At the same time he petitioned for the Grodno diocese to be given into his care since Bishop Sabbas (Sovetov) of Grodno had fled to the west. On October 17, 1939 the MP granted his petition and appointed him exarch of Belorussia.[318] However, in June, 1940 Archbishop Nicholas (Yarushevich) was sent from Moscow as exarch, while Panteleimon, after being officially received into the MP on July 10, was appointed head of the new Grodno-Vilnius diocese with more than 300 parishes.[319]

As for the Orthodox in German-occupied Poland, on September 1, 1939 the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR ordered Archbishop Seraphim (Lyade): (a) if necessary, to help the Orthodox hierarchy in Poland (since, as being loyal to the former Polish government, it might be subjected to repressions), (b) but if there will turn out to be no hierarchy in Poland (that is, if it will be repressed), to take upon himself the care of the flock deprived of archpastoral care.[320] As it turned out, there was a considerable movement of the parishes of the Polish autocephaly in German-occupied Poland to ROCOR, and Archbishop Seraphim was invited to Warsaw to take control of the Warsaw diocese. He arrived on November 10, but Metropolitan Dionysius was not yet ready to concede defeat, so Seraphim returned to Berlin.

However, on December 23 Dionysius wrote to Seraphim: "The collapse of the independent Polish State on whose existence the independence and autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland was dependent, deprives the Church of the possibility of an autocephalous existence in the future. The new State order established on the former Polish territory, which now belongs to the sphere of German imperial interests, makes it necessary for the former Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland to be united with the ecclesiastical organizations which you, Your Eminence, represent. In consequence of this I ask Your Eminence to come soon to Warsaw and take upon yourself the administration of this part of the former Autocephalous Church in Poland, which has entered into the sphere of German imperial interests. In connection with the considerations expounded above, I inform you that from the day of your taking upon yourself the administration of the Church I will renounce the further care of the above-mentioned Church."

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[316] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, №, p. 9.

[317] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, №, p. 3.

[318] Archbishop Athanasius (Martos), "Belarus' v istoricheskoj, gosudarstvennoj i tserkovnoj zhizni" (Belarus in its historical, state and ecclesiastical life); in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 4.

[319] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, №, pp. 9-10.

[320] Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), *Arkhierejskij Sinod vo II Mirovuiu vojnu* (The Hierarchical Synod during the Second World War), p. 322; in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 2.

Dionysius left Warsaw and went again to his dacha in Otvotsk. Seraphim then again went to Warsaw and entered on the administration of the Warsaw-Kholm diocese. However, this was rather a temporary administration, since the official annulment of the autocephaly did not take place and the name of Metropolitan Dionysius continued as before to be commemorated in all services as the head of the Church. Nevertheless, Archbishop Seraphim, as locum tenens of the Polish Autocephalous Church in the German province, did manage to remove the new style and forbid other innovations, such as the shaving of priests. Moreover, he was able to restore over 75 churches taken from the Orthodox as well as the Turkovitsky monastery.

However, Bishop Savva (Sovetov) of Grodno, filed a complaint against Seraphim's activities to the Ecumenical Patriarch, who declared them uncanonical.[321] And on September 23, 1940 in Krakow the General-Governor Frank told Dionysius that he was being restored to the administration of the Orthodox Church in the province. This was followed by a wave of Ukrainianization in the so-called "Autocephalous Orthodox Church in the General-Governorship".[322]

Further north, the communists were extending their tentacles. Although they were repulsed from Finland with the loss of 250,000 lives, they took control of the Baltic States without any trouble. In 1939 the MP sent Archbishop Sergius (Voskresensky) of Dmitrov to Riga as the patriarchal exarch in the occupied Baltic States. In December, 1940 he received the Churches of Latvia and Estonia, which had been granted autocephaly by Constantinople, into the MP. Metropolitan Augustine (Peterson) of Riga went into retirement.[323] Then, in March, 1941, after the death of Metropolitan Eleutherius on December 31, he took control of the see of Vilnius and Lithuania.[324]

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[321] Heyer, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche*, p. 162; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 5-6, 7.

[322] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 11-13.

[323] The letter he sent to Metropolitan Alexander of Tallin is cited by Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 15-18.

[324] As we have seen, Metropolitan Eleutherius was notable for the eight long letters he wrote to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) in 1925 criticizing his *Dogma of Redemption* (*Ob Iskuplenii* (On Redemption), Paris, 1937). He rejected Polish autocephaly, and in 1931, after Metropolitan Eulogius' departure to Constantinople, he ruled the patriarchal parishes in Western Europe. In 1939 he again became Metropolitan of Vilnius and Lithuania.

In December, 1941 Metropolitans Alexander of Tallin and Augustine of Riga travelled to Moscow, repented publicly of the sin of schism and were received into communion.[325]

"Rule over the new diocesan provinces," writes Volkogonov, "was established, naturally, by means of the secret services. As an illustration of the process, the following report was received by Stalin in March, 1941 from B. Merkulov, People's Commissar for State Security of the USSR:

"'There are at present in the territories of the Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian republics autocephalous [autonomous] Orthodox churches, headed by local metropolitans who are placemen of the bourgeois governments.

"'In the Latvian SSR there are 175,000 Orthodox parishioners. Anti-Soviet elements, former members of the Fascist organization 'Perkanirust', are grouped around the head of the Synod, Augustin.

"'In the Estonian SSR there are 40,000 Orthodox. The head of the eparchy has died. Archbishop Fedosi Fedoseev, who heads an anti-Soviet group of churchmen, is trying to grab the job.

"'The NKVD has prepared the following measures:

"'1) Through an NKVD agency we will get the Moscow patriarchate to issue a resolution on the subordination of the Orthodox churches of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to itself, using a declaration from local rank and file clergy and believers for the purpose.

"'2) By a decision of the Moscow patriarchate we shall appoint as eparch Archbishop Dmitri Nikolayevich Voskresensky[326] (an agent of the NKGB of the USSR), using for the purpose appropriate requests from the local clergy, which are to be found in the Moscow patriarchate."[327]

It is striking how openly Merkulov talks about using the patriarchate for political purposes here… The fact that Sergius (Voskresensky) was an agent of the NKGB makes it highly probable that his three fellow metropolitans who were still in freedom – Sergius (Stragorodsky), Nicholas and Alexis – were also agents. Indeed, according to the apostate professor-priest A. Osipov, Patriarch Alexis feared that Nicholas was an agent of the Bolsheviks.[328]

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[325] Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 19.
[326] This is probably a mistake for "Archbishop Sergius Voskresensky of Dmitrov". (V.M.)
[327] Volkogonov, op. cit., pp. 385-386.
[328] Danilushkin, op. cit., p. 922.

He was right to be afraid: Nicholas *was* an agent. This was confirmed by a secret letter from Beria to Stalin, in which it was proposed "under the cover of NKVD agent B.D. Yarushevich, Archbishop of the Leningrad diocese, to create an illegal residency for the NKVD of the USSR so as to organize the work of agents amidst churchmen".[329] Nicholas denied that he "had ever collaborated with the communists".[330] However, KGB defector Major Deriabin testified before the U.S. Senate Internal Security Subcommittee on May 5, 1959 that under instructions from the KGB, he himself had collaborated with Agent Nicholas, and that when a Soviet delegation to the Vienna Conference for Peace was to arrive in Vienna, Colonel Kovalev referred to him a telegram with the order "to take care of the delegation", and that "Metropolitan Nicholas is an agent of State Security".

This demonstrates, continues Volkogonov, "the reasons behind Lenin's confident assertion that 'our victory over the clergy is fully assured'. So complete indeed was that victory that even Stalin and his associates were at times at a loss to know whether someone was a priest or an NKGB agent in a cassock. While boasting loudly of freedom of conscience and quoting copiously from Lenin's hypocritical statements on how humanely socialism treated religion, the Bolshevik regime, through the widespread use of violence, had turned the dwelling-place of the spirit and faith into a den of the thought-police…"[331]

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[329] *Moskovskaia Pravda* (Moscow Truth) (12 March, 1996. See also Protopriest Michael Ardov, "Russkij Intelligent v Arkhierejskom Sane" (A Russian Intellectual in the Rank of a Bishop), *Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 1 (77), January-February, 1999, p. 8.

[330] *Associated Press* report of June 6, 1956.

[331] Volkogonov, op. cit., p. 386.

30. THE COST OF SERGIANISM

Even patriarchal sources have spoken about the falsity of Sergius' declaration, the true confession of those who opposed him, and the invalidity of the measures he took to punish them. Thus: "Amidst the opponents of Metropolitan Sergius were a multitude of remarkable martyrs and confessors, bishops, monks, priests… The 'canonical' bans of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) and his Synod were taken seriously by no one, neither at that time [the 1930s] nor later by dint of the uncanonicity of the situation of Metropolitan Sergius himself…"[332] And again: "The particular tragedy of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius consists in its principled rejection of the podvig of martyrdom and confession, without which witnessing to the truth is inconceivable. In this way Metropolitan Sergius took as his foundation not hope on the Providence of God, but a purely human approach to the resolution of church problems… The courage of the 'catacombniks' and their firmness of faith cannot be doubted, and it is our duty to preserve the memory of those whose names we shall probably learn only in eternity…"[333]

If Metropolitan Sergius thought that his betrayal of the True Orthodox Christians would "save the Church", the next few years would prove him terribly wrong. From 1935 the Bolsheviks began to repress all the clergy, sergianist as well as True Orthodox. According to Russian government figures, in 1937 alone 136,900 clergy were arrested, of whom 106,800 were killed; while between 1917 and 1980, 200,000 clergy were executed and 500,000 others were imprisoned or sent to the camps. The rate of killing slowed down considerably in the following years. In 1939 900 clergy were killed, in 1940 – 1100, in 1941 – 1900, in 1943 – 500. In the period 1917 to 1940 205 Russian hierarchs "disappeared without trace"; 59 disappeared in 1937 alone.[334] By 1939 there were only four bishops of the sergianist church at liberty, and only a tiny handful of churches open in the whole country…

The situation was no better with regard to churches. There were no churches at all in Belorussia (Kolarz), "less than a dozen" in Ukraine (Bociurkiw), and a total of 150-200 in the whole of Russia.[335] In all, the numbers of functioning Orthodox churches declined from 54,692 in 1914 to 39,000 at the beginning of 1929 to 15, 835 on April 1, 1936.[336]

And yet the census of 1937 established that one-third of city-dwellers and two-thirds of country-dwellers still confessed that they believed in God. Stalin's plan that the Name of God should not be named in the country by the year 1937 had failed…

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[332] Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 809, 810.
[333] Danilushkin, op. cit., pp. 297, 520.
[334] Davis, op. cit., p. 13.
[335] Werth, op. cit., pp. 172, 173.
[336] Polsky, op. cit., vol. II, p. 32.

But what of the future? What hopes did the Christians of the Catacomb Church nurture with regard to a deliverance from their terrible sufferings? If some, like Bishop Maximus of Serpukhov, were pessimistic about the future, thinking that the very last days of the world had been reached, others prophesied the resurrection of Holy Russia before the end, such as Bishop Victor of Glazov. Eldress Agatha of Belorussia, who was starved to death by the authorities in 1939 at the age of 119, told her spiritual children concerning the Soviet Church: "This is not a true church. It has signed a contract to serve the Antichrist. Do not go to it. Do not receive any Mysteries from its servants. Do not participate in prayer with them." And then she said: "There will come a time when churches will be opened in Russia, and the true Orthodox Faith will triumph. Then people will become baptized, as at one time they were baptized under St. Vladimir. When the churches are opened for the first time, do not go to them because these will not be true churches; but when they are opened the second time, then go – these will be the true churches. I will not live to see this time, but many of you will live to this time. The atheist Soviet authority will vanish, and all its servants will perish…"[337]

However, the immediate outlook at the end of the thirties was bleak indeed. E.L., writing about Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene, comments: "He warmed the hearts of many, but the masses remained… passive and inert, moving in any direction in accordance with an external push, and not their inner convictions… The long isolation of Bishop Damascene from Soviet life, his remoteness from the gradual process of sovietization led him to an unrealistic assessment of the real relations of forces in the reality that surrounded him. Although he remained unshaken himself, he did not see… the desolation of the human soul in the masses. This soul had been diverted onto another path – a slippery, opportunistic path which led people where the leaders of Soviet power – bold men who stopped at nothing in their attacks on all moral and material values – wanted them to go… Between the hierarchs and priests who had languished in the concentration camps and prisons, and the mass of the believers, however firmly they tried to stand in the faith, there grew an abyss of mutual incomprehension. The confessors strove to raise the believers onto a higher plane and bring their spiritual level closer to their own. The mass of believers, weighed down by the cares of life and family, blinded by propaganda, involuntarily went in the opposite direction, downwards. Visions of a future golden age of satiety, of complete liberty from all external and internal restrictions, of the submission of the forces of nature to man, deceitful perspectives in which fantasy passed for science… were used by the Bolsheviks to draw the overwhelming majority of the people into their nets. Only a few individuals were able to preserve a loftiness of spirit. This situation was exploited very well by Metropolitan Sergius…"[338]

Sergius has had many apologists. Some have claimed that he "saved the Church" for a future generation, when the whirlwind of the persecution had passed. This claim cannot be justified, as we have seen. It was rather the Catacomb Church, which, as Alexeyev writes, “in a sense saved the official Church from complete destruction because the Soviet authorities were afraid to force the entire Russian Church underground through ruthless suppression and so to lose control over it.”[339] As St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco wrote: “The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius brought no benefit to the Church. The persecutions not only did not cease, but sharply increased. To the number of other accusations brought by the Soviet regime against clergy and laymen, one more was added – non-recognition of the Declaration. At the same time, a wave of church closings rolled over all Russia… Concentration camps and places of forced labor held thousands of clergymen, a significant part of whom never saw freedom again, being executed there or dying from excessive labors and deprivations.”[340]

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[337] Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, op. cit., pp. 422-23.

[338] E.L., op. cit., pp. 65-66.

Others have tried to justify Sergius by claiming that there are two paths to salvation, one through open confession or the descent into the catacombs, and the other through compromise. Sergius, according to this view, was no less a martyr than the Catacomb martyrs, only he suffered the martyrdom of losing his good name.[341] However, this view comes close to the “Rasputinite” heresy that there can be salvation through sin – in this case, the most brazen lying, the sacrifice of the freedom and dignity of the Church and Orthodoxy, and the betrayal to torments and death of one’s fellow Christians! Thus Hieromartyr Sergius Mechev was betrayed by "Bishop" Manuel Lemeshevsky.[342] And more generally, Metropolitan Sergius' charge that all the catacomb bishops were "counter-revolutionaries" was sufficient to send them to their deaths.[343]

Sergianists are constantly trying to prove that the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, though disastrous for the Church, was nevertheless motivated by the purest of feelings. Apart from the inherent improbability that an action motivated by the purest of feelings - and therefore inspired by the Grace of God - would bring disaster, both physical and spiritual, to thousands, if not millions of people, we have seen that Sergius was an opportunist from the beginning, from well before the revolution.

Further proof of this is provided in the *Memoirs* of Princess Natalya Vladimirovna Urusova: "The personality of Metropolitan Sergius was of the basest, crawling before the authorities. Many people asked each other: 'Does Metropolitan Sergius really take part in the persecutions and the destruction of churches?' Some did not admit that he took an active part in this, but, unfortunately, they were wrong. He completely sold himself to satan. I can cite a case personally known to me which confirms the fact of his participation in these works.

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[339] W. Alexeyev, "The Russian Orthodox Church 1927-1945: Repression and Revival", *Religion in Communist Lands,* vol. 7, № 1, Spring, 1979, p. 30.

[340] St. John Maximovich, *The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. A Short History*, Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, pp. 28-29. Even a recent biography of Sergius by an MP author accepts this fact: “If Metropolitan Sergius, in agreeing in his name to publish the Declaration of 1927 composed by the authorities, hoping to buy some relief for the Church and the clergy, then his hopes not only were not fulfilled, but the persecutions after 1927 became still fiercer, reaching truly hurricane-force in 1937-38.” (Sergius Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia* (Guardian of the House of the Lord), Moscow, 2003, p. 262)

[341] E.S. Polishchuk, "Patriarkh Sergei i ego deklaratsia: kapitulatsia ili kompromiss?" (Patriarch Sergius and his Declaration: Capitulation or Compromise?), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), № 161, 1991-I, pp. 233-250.

[342] Alla D. "Svidetel'stvo" (Witness), *Nadezhda* (Hope), vol. 16, Basel-Moscow, 1993, 228-230.

[343] I.M. Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?,* op. cit., p. 30.

"In the church of St. Nicholas the Big Cross there chanted in the choir a young girl, very humble and nice. The whole of her family was religious, and consequently did not recognize the sergianist church. We got to know each other, and I and Andryusha would often go to their dacha near Moscow. Verochka worked in the main post office in Moscow, she was welcoming and good-looking. Once there came to her department on service matters a GPU boss. He was attracted to her and began to talk with her. To her horror and that of her family, he asked for their address. Unexpectedly he came to the dacha, thoroughly frightening everyone, of course. After all, it was impossible ever to know the intentions of these terrible people. Having said hello, he brought out a box of pastries, which no simple mortal could get at that time, and gave it to Verochka, asking her to accept him as a guest. He began to come often and to court her. Probably everyone was quietly and secretly crossing themselves, praying to be delivered from this guest. But there was nothing to be done. He looked about 30, with quite an interesting appearance. Almost immediately they set off on a walk without Verochka's father and mother, while Andryusha and I hurried to leave. Verochka said that she could have liked him, but the single thought that he was not only the boss of a GPU department, but, as he himself said, in charge of Church affairs, repulsed and horrified her. He proposed to her. She refused. 'How can I be your wife, when you are not only not a believer, but a persecutor of the Church, and I can never under any circumstances agree with that.' During their conversations he tried by every means to draw her away from faith in God, but she was unbending, the more so in that she was one of the beloved spiritual children of the murdered Fr. Alexander. He did not give up, but threatened to shoot her and himself. Moreover, he once even got out his revolver and pointed it at her. He continued to visit her. The family's situation was terrible. They couldn't think of sleeping or eating. They spoke only about one thing: how it would all end, with his taking revenge or his leaving them in peace? Verochka rushed around like a trapped bird trying to extricate herself from the claws of a hawk. Once when she was working (at the post office) she was summoned and given a note to go immediately to the GPU at the Lubyanka... It turned out to be his office. He ordered her to take up the telephone receiver. Then he took up another and summoned Metropolitan Sergius. "Listen to the conversation," he told her. The conversation was about the destruction of one of the churches in Moscow. Sergius not only did not register any protest, but took part in this terrible affair and gave his agreement. "Did you hear?" said the boss. "That's the kind of clergy you bow down to." She replied that this conversation could not shake her faith in God, and that even before she had not recognized Metropolitan Sergius, while now she was convinced that she had not been mistaken about him… "[344]

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[344] N.V. Urusova, *Materinskij Plach Sviatoj Rusi* (The Maternal Lament of Holy Rus'), Moscow: "Russkij Palomnik", 2006, pp. 285-287.

Sergius made the basic mistake of forgetting that it is God, not man, Who saves the Church. This mistake almost amounts to a loss of faith in the Providence and Omnipotence of God Himself. The faith that saves is the faith that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19.26). It is the faith that cries: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 19.7). This was and is the faith of the Catacomb Church, which, being founded on "the Rock, which is Christ" (I Corinthians 10.7), has prevailed against the gates of hell.

But Sergius' "faith" was of a different, more "supple" kind, the kind of which the Prophet spoke: "Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we have an agreement; when the overwhelming scourge passes through it will not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter'; therefore thus says the Lord God,… hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter. Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with hell will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through you will be beaten down by it…" (Isaiah 28.15, 17-19)

A Catacomb Appeal of the period wrote: "May this article drop a word that will be as a burning spark in the heart of every person who has Divinity in himself and faith in our One Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Beloved brethren! Orthodox Christians, peace-makers! Do not forget your brothers who are suffering in cells and prisons for the word of God and for the faith, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, for they are in terrible dark bonds which have been built as tombs for all innocent people. Thousands and thousands of peace-loving brothers are languishing, buried alive in these tombs, these cemeteries; their bodies are wasting away and their souls are in pain every day and every hour, nor is there one minute of consolation, they are doomed to death and a hopeless life. These are the little brothers of Christ, they bear that cross which the Lord bore. Jesus Christ received suffering and death and was buried in the tomb, sealed by a stone and guarded by a watch. The hour came when death could not hold in its bonds the body of Christ that had suffered, for an Angel of the Lord coming down from the heavens rolled away the stone from the tomb and the soldiers who had been on guard fled in great fear. The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. But the thunder will also strike these castles where the brothers languish for the word of God, and will smash the bolts where death threatens men..."[345]

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[345] M.V. Shkvarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo*, op. cit., p. 236.